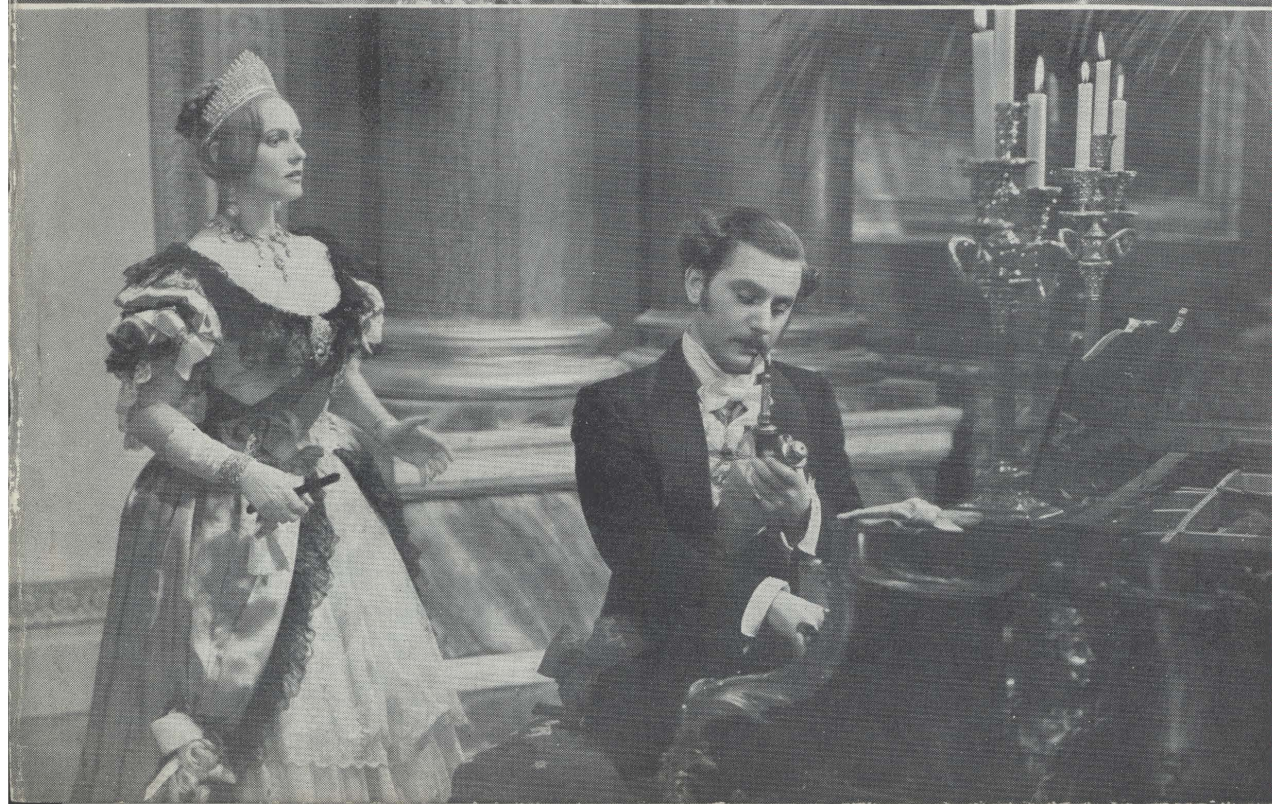
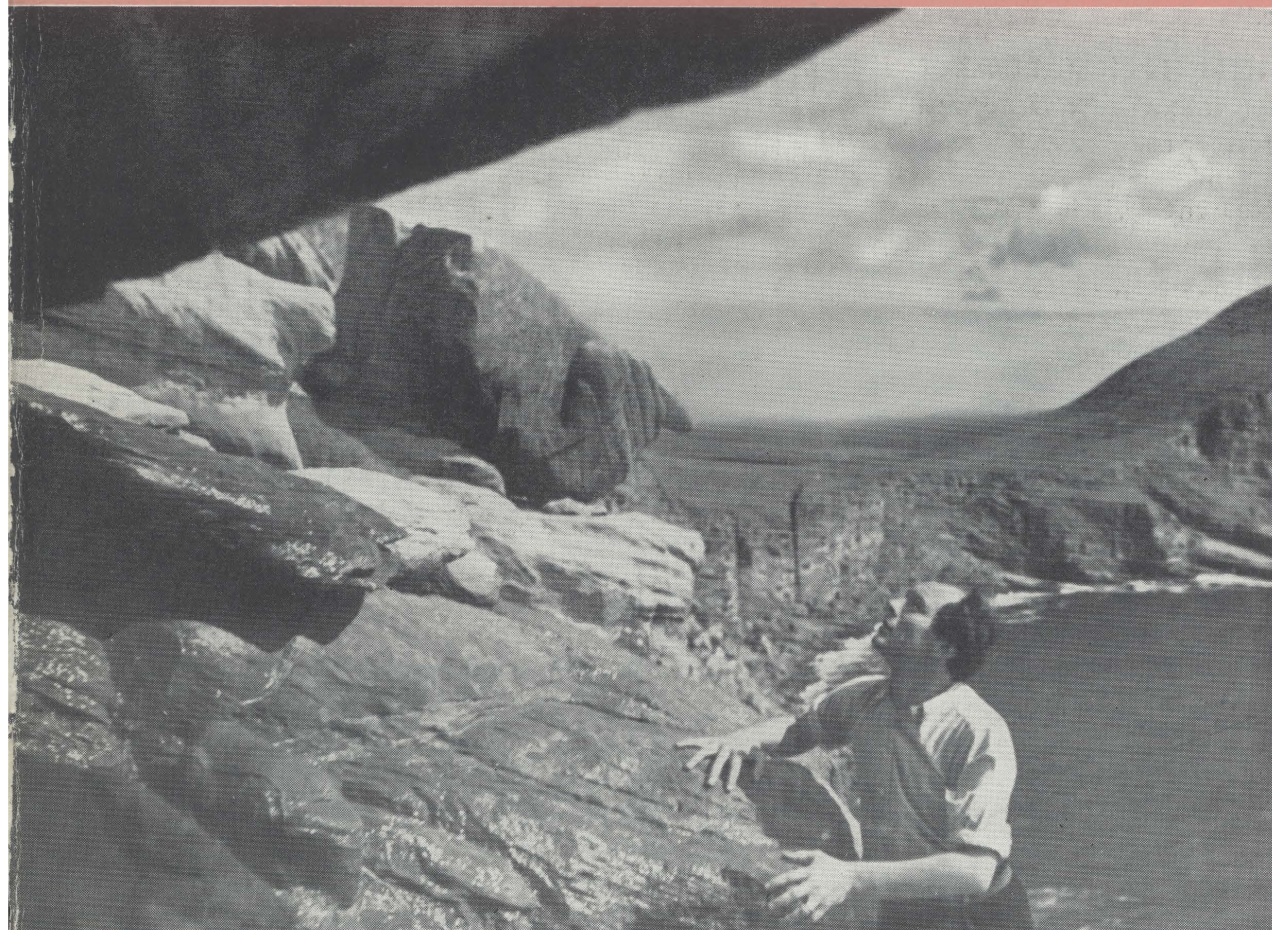


SIGHT & SOUND

AUTUMN 1937 VOL 6 NO 23 PRICE SIXPENCE



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Film News and Reviews

The Edge of the World

Tibetan Horizon

The Cinema in Scandinavia

The British Cinema 1914

Running the Everyman

Crime Over the World

Entertainment Plus

Sacha Guitry and the Rest

The World We Live In

The Cinema in Education

G.P.O. Film Unit

Science Teaching Films

Primary Schools and Films

CONTRIBUTORS

Andrew Buchanan

F. Spencer Chapman

H. Forsyth Hardy

Marie Seton

J. S. Fairfax Jones

Arthur Vesselo

Alan Page

Thomas Baird

Ernest Dyer

J. B. Holmes

Catherine Fletcher

Alexander Mackay

F. Wilkinson

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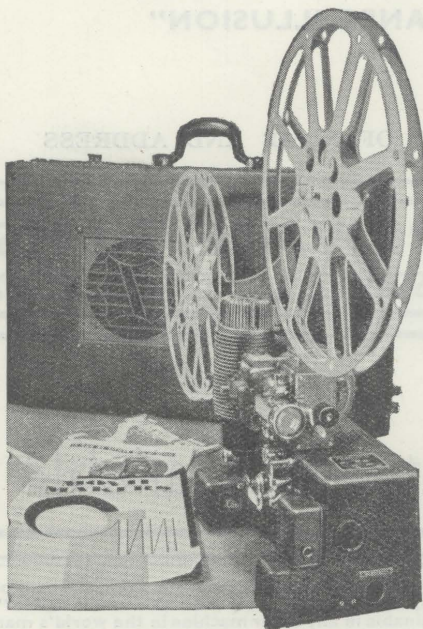
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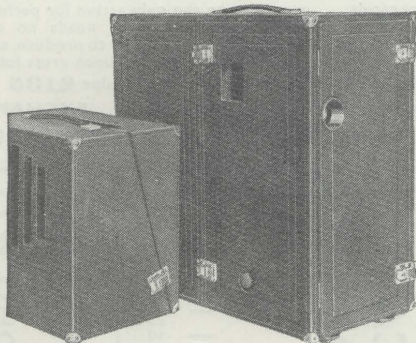
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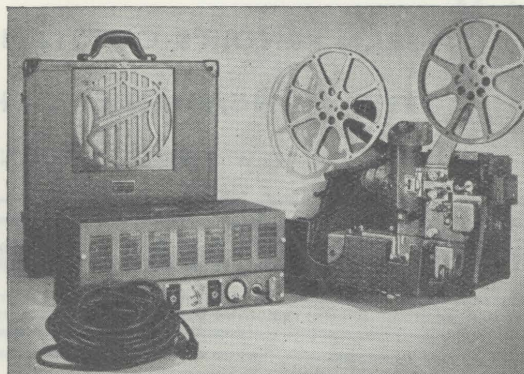
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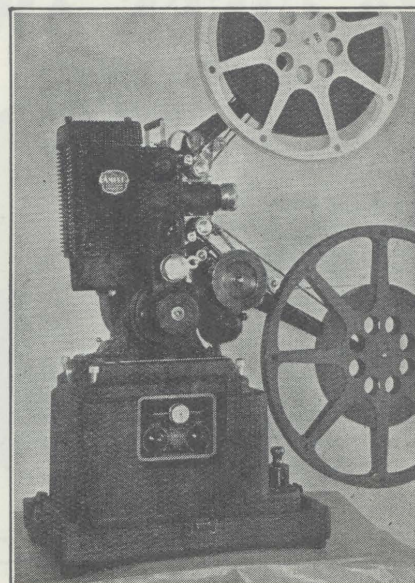
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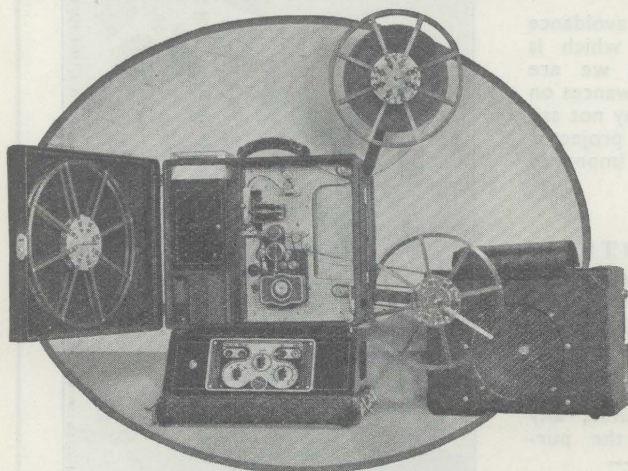
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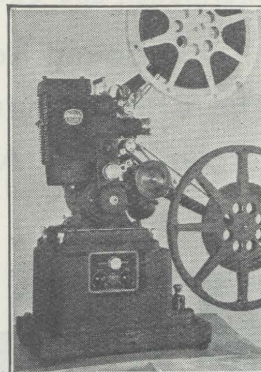
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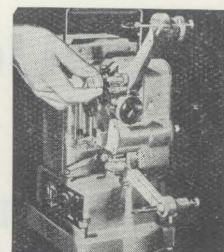
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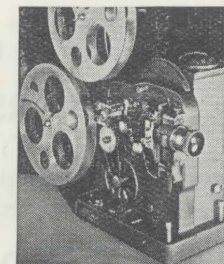
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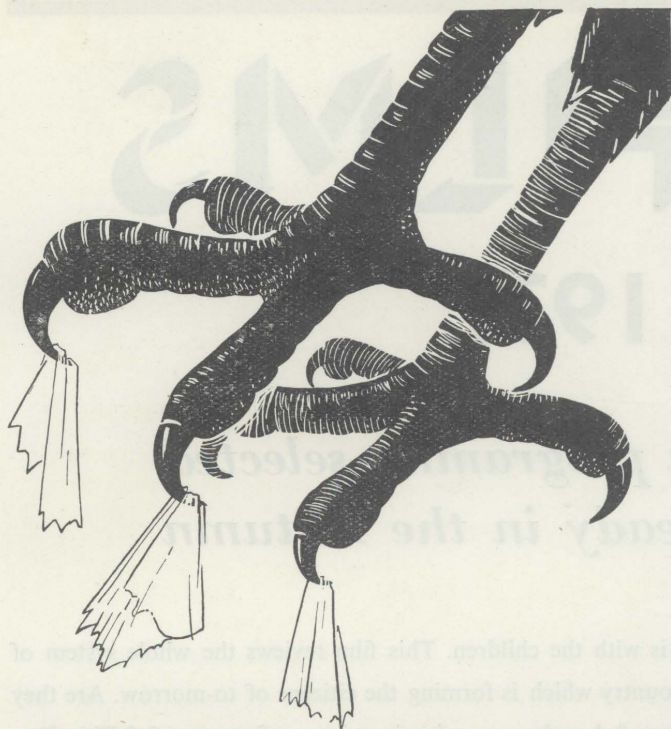
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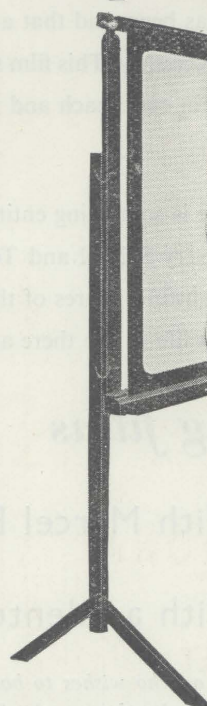
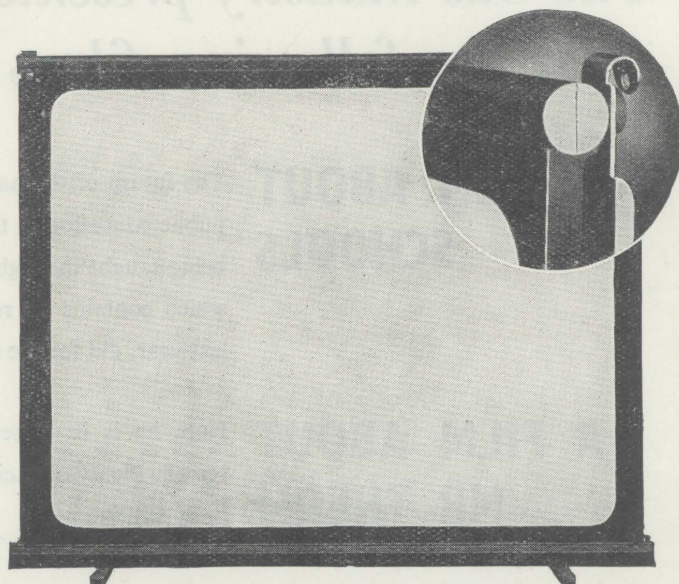
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Editorial and Publishing Offices: British Film Institute, 4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1. SIGHT AND SOUND is sent free to members of the Institute (annual subscription £1. 1s. od.). The annual subscription for SIGHT AND SOUND is 2s. 6d. including postage. Subscription forms enclosed in this issue. Sole Advertising Agent, to whom all enquiries should be addressed: E. E. Preston, 69 Fleet Street, London, E.C.4.

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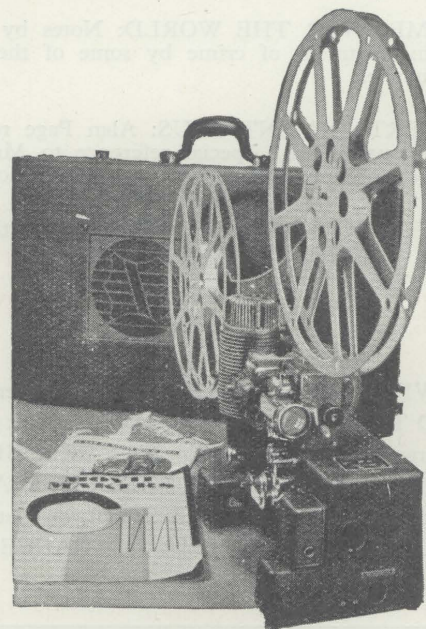
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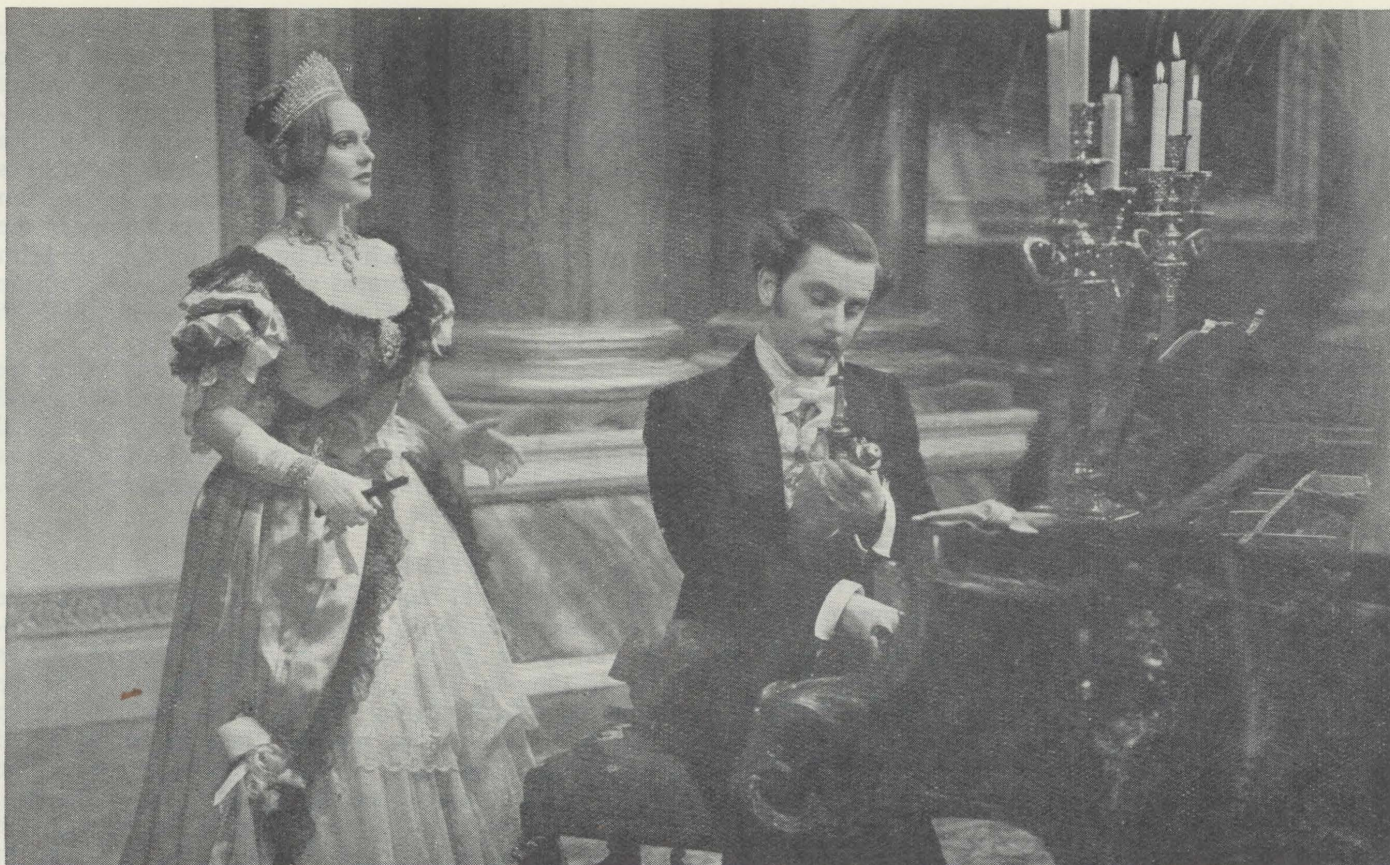
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NEWS OF THE QUARTER

QUOTA AND AMERICAN PRODUCTION IN ENGLAND

The text of the Cinematograph Films Bill was issued on October 28th. It provides: (1) Renters' quota for *long films* to be 15 rising to 30 per cent, and for *short films* 10 rising to 20 per cent. (2) Exhibitors' quota for *long films* to be 10 rising to 25 per cent, and for *short films* 5 rising to 15 per cent. (3) For exhibitors' quota all British films to be available. (4) For renters' quota, all British films, on which at least £1 a foot with a minimum of £7,500 has been expended in labour costs, to qualify for registration. (5) Films costing less than the minimum may count for renters' quota if they have special entertainment value. (6) British long films, on which at least £3 a foot with a minimum of £22,500 has been expended in labour costs, to count double for renters' quota. (7) A renter who acquires for not less than £20,000 the distribution rights of a British film for a foreign country shall be able to count the film for his quota; but the renter who acquires the rights of the same film for Great Britain will not also be allowed to count it for his quota. (8) No cost or quality test at present for short films. (9) The Bill applies to all films except news reels or advertising films. (10) The Board of Trade shall continue to be advised by the Advisory Committee and may vary the cost qualifications by 25 per cent, and review quotas in 1939 and 1943, subject to Parliament's consent.

The Bill still does not meet the criticisms levelled at the White Paper issued in July, by those who maintain that a

cost test is no guarantee of quality, that these minimum costs tests are both too high and too low to be effective and will create a difficult situation for independent producers and exhibitors, that the quota for shorts is too small, that a new kind of Advisory Committee is required, and that the proposals, as a whole, are remarkable for the way in which they neglect the recommendations of the Moyne Committee and will encourage the production of films in Great Britain rather than the production of British films.

Meanwhile this country is being visited, for longer or shorter periods by the heads of leading American companies and by stars, directors and technicians in connection with production or plans for production of British films in this country. M.G.M.-British, with Michael Balcon, late of Gaumont-British as production manager, plan to produce four films, probably at Denham and have started production on *A Yank at Oxford*. The film is being directed by Jack Conway; the leading players are Robert Taylor, Lionel Barrymore, Maureen O'Sullivan and Vivien Leigh. 20th Century Fox have announced that they intend to produce four films at Pinewood for the world market, with Robert Kane in charge; production has begun at Denham on a Gracie Fields-Victor McLaglen film which it is said will cost £200,000. Adolph Zukor, during his recent visit, announced that Paramount are considering production for world release in this country but will reserve their plans until more is known about the new Cinematograph Act.

Warner Brothers-First National plan to increase studio space at Teddington and announce that they will produce fifteen films during the year. Four of them will be selected from their Hollywood schedule and for them leading stars will be brought from Hollywood. Herbert Wilcox, with his newly-formed company Emperor Films, has signed a contract to make four films for Radio at a cost of some £150,000 each. While these films are to be intended for world release Herbert Wilcox, with the American success of *Victoria the Great* to encourage him, announces that his films will be "essentially British in subject and setting", because he believes that such films will have true international value. In search also of the control of foreign markets Alexander Korda is now in America engaged on negotiations whereby he and Goldwyn will share control of United Artists.

AMERICAN FILM MARKETS

The year 1936 brought to American film producers the highest foreign revenues since the introduction of sound films into foreign markets in 1929-30, in spite of intensified legislation in most foreign countries designed to restrict the importation of American films and to promote national productions. In a *Review of Foreign Film Markets During 1936* prepared by the United States Department of Commerce it is stated that total American exports for the first ten months of 1936 exceeded exports for the same period of 1935 by 8½ million feet. The *Review* concludes, however, that the outlook appears somewhat dubious in view of import restrictions, censorship, and the growth of national production industries outside America and suggests that the American industry must increasingly produce "pictures with an international appeal which are so obviously superior . . . that foreign audiences will insist on seeing them."

The *Review* contains a digest of factors affecting American markets in every foreign country, including interesting information on film legislation, methods and range of censorship, copyright, taxation, number of cinemas, imports from America and national production. It is stated that during 1936 about 1,400 feature films were produced outside America. This total is analysed as follows: Great Britain 217, Germany 130, France 125, U.S.S.R. 92, Spain 32, Sweden 27, Czechoslovakia 26, and Hungary 20, making a total for Europe of 721; Mexico 28, Argentina 20, Brazil 7, and Peru 1, making a total for Latin America of 56 as compared with 83 in 1935; Japan 496, China 100, India 40, the Philippines 15, Egypt 10, Australia 9, New Zealand 3 and Dutch East Indies 1.

A.B.C.-UNION MERGER

Associated British Cinemas, of which the head is John Maxwell, have acquired a large holding of shares in Union Cinemas; two A.B.C. directors will join the Union's board and the two concerns will, in future, be operated jointly. This merger creates the largest cinema circuit, nearly 500, in this country and in Europe: A.B.C. has some 325 and Union 167. The Gaumont-British circuit, including cinemas now being constructed, includes some 350 cinemas; the Odeon some 250. Out of a total of some 4,400 cinemas, therefore, the three great circuits account for about 1,100.

DOCUMENTARY IN ENGLAND AND U.S.A.

A programme of British documentary films, introduced by Mr. J. B. Priestley, was presented by the English Speaking Union at the Phoenix Theatre, London, on September 20th. The films were selected from the collection of films representative of the British documentary

school which Mr. Paul Rotha has now taken to America with him to illustrate the lectures which he is giving throughout America under the auspices of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library and to be circulated subsequently by the Film Library. Mr. Rotha will be in America for six months and is to assist Mr. J. E. Abbott and Miss Iris Barry, Director and Curator respectively of the Film Library, in the production of a film on the history of the cinema. In this film, which will be distributed by the Film Library, will be incorporated scenes and sequences from many of the famous and important films which the Film Library has acquired and is distributing.

At the same time that America is being enabled to see British documentary films and in them aspects of the real life of this country which are rarely presented in fictional films, the English Speaking Union is showing, in various parts of England, a number of films sponsored by the U.S. Government.

CHINA WAR NEWSREELS

Horrific newsreel material from Shanghai issued in the Paramount and Universal newsreels has provoked considerable controversy. Only the cameramen of these companies and *The March of Time* cameraman were at hand when the International Settlement at Shanghai was bombarded from the air and their cameras reported the horrible death and mutilation that occurred. A trade argument against the exhibition of these newsreels was put by Jeffrey Bernerd, head of Gaumont British News, who said that "it is the duty of the newsreels to present news, but not to put on the screen material for a political purpose. The exhibitors of this country run their theatres with the idea of entertaining the public. To show the ghastly destruction of human beings in the most horrific form is letting down the exhibitor." The newsreel companies concerned, exhibitors, and members of the public were quick to point out that no exhibitor could be forced to show the sequences in question and that the public was warned by notices outside most of the cinemas, and asked whether the limitation which Jeffrey Bernerd would impose on the cinema is valid or desirable and whether it was so novel for newsreels to include "material for political purposes." In an editorial article the *Daily Film Renter* thus summarised the arguments for showing such scenes. "After I'd viewed them, I felt unhesitatingly these pictures ought to be shown. Personally, I think it time newsreels showed the public these terrors and horrors, so that people themselves can see that it's no drawing-room entertainment, but stark realism in all its grimmest and most horrible truth. I've always contended the newsreels should do their job—and this is one of them—however dreadful it may appear on the screen."

It is impossible to say "what the public thought" but ordinary cinema managers and news theatre managers reported little complaint and much approval. The attitude, however, of some sections of the public, concerned especially for the effect on children and adolescents, since newsreels are not subject to censorship, is represented by the appreciation expressed by the Cinema Christian Council "of the careful editing by certain of the newsreel companies of recent pictures showing the grim realities of the hostilities in China."

FILMS AND PEACE

At the recent meeting of the League of Nations Assembly

a series of interesting discussions took place on the use of modern means of spreading information in the cause of peace. Speaking of the cinema Lord Cranborne, the British delegate, paid some compliments to the work of the British Film Institute and the National Film Library and recommended other countries to set up similar bodies. This recommendation was approved by the Assembly. Other points referred to in the final report adopted by the Assembly, are the training of children's taste in regard to films, and the role of the Film Societies as a means of encouraging the production of good quality films, two more matters in which this country has taken the lead. On the international side the League will endeavour to persuade more countries to make use of its Convention for Facilitating the International Circulation of Films of an Educational Character which at present is in force only as between some twenty countries. It is also to make enquiries during the year as to the advisability of having meetings between film-producers, scenario writers and others to see whether by that means the production of tendentious films can be prevented, and whether it is possible to encourage the making of truly artistic films which will enable the different peoples to understand one another better. Though progress will inevitably be slow, the League's effort is well worth while for moral disarmament is the true foundation of international appeasement.

FILMS FOR CHILDREN

As a result of a questionnaire addressed to cinema exhibitors throughout the country the British Film Institute now possesses detailed information relating to 360 cinemas which regularly run special children's performances. Because it is believed that this figure does not represent the total number of cinemas which run children's performances further efforts are being made to obtain more information before the questionnaires are analysed. A first scrutiny of them reveals, as was expected, the popularity of the performances, cheapness of prices, and, generally speaking, a conscious and real effort to show the best and most suitable films at the performances. The replies also reveal, generally speaking, apathy on the part of local organisations from whom assistance and support were sought by local exhibitors; but there is also evidence that local education authorities and other social bodies are now prepared to give practical assistance to well-conceived and properly organised schemes.

In September Odeon Theatres set up a special department to organise its 100 Mickey Mouse Clubs, which have over 100,000 members, and to promote further Clubs where local conditions are favourable. Besides making every effort to show the best films that are available the organisers and the local managers try to teach the members of the clubs to behave safely in the streets and to help such public institutions as children's hospitals.

The Children's Film Society, run by the Everyman Cinema Theatre, Hampstead, has begun its new Season. It was this Society which devised the attractive classifications for non-fictional films which were adopted in the B.F.I. *List of Films Recommended For Children*.

FILMS FOR THE CHURCHES

The quarter has seen some important developments in the production of films for the churches and in the use of them. G.B. Instructional has begun production on a film of a Tolstoy short story, the first of a series of six films being

made specifically for religious use. On September 28th the Religious Film Society, with which the Cinema Christian Council is in close co-operation, opened a film studio at Upper Norwood, London. It is the first fully equipped studio, to be set aside for the production of religious films. A short dedicatory service was conducted by the Bishop of Lichfield and Dr. Scott Lidgett.

It is estimated that there are about 1,000 projectors being used by churches and this number is increasing, thanks to the offer at a much reduced price of a number of 16mm. sound projectors which the Religious Film Society was enabled to make by the generosity of Mr. J. A. Rank. But the experience of a vicar in Leeds may represent serious difficulties which will have to be faced in other parts of the country. Permission to show films in a church was refused by the Leeds Watch Committee on the grounds that it has no authority to give such permission without first taking a poll of the electors on the question of Sunday opening under the Sunday Entertainments Act.

EDUCATIONAL FILMS IN PRISONS

The Prison Commissioners in a circular issued to all the establishments with which they are concerned have approved of the introduction of films into the educational programmes at certain of these establishments. The circular contains advice on the type of projectors and service most suitable and information about the services which the British Film Institute has afforded to the Prison Commissioners in their deliberations and which it offers to Governors who wish to use educational films. During September a programme of films chosen by the Institute was presented on three occasions at Wormwood Scrubs.

VENICE FILM FESTIVAL

At the fifth International Exhibition of Cinematograph Art held at Venice two awards were won by British films. The Cup of the Nations was won by Wilcox's *Victoria The Great* and the award for the best non-Italian director went to Robert Flaherty and Zoltan Korda for *Elephant Boy*. Other open awards were as follows: Sacha Guitry's *Les Perles de la Couronne* (best scenario); the German *Mannesmann* (best documentary); the Italian *Condottieri* (best production of natural and artistic beauty); Luce Productions (best educational film); Emil Jannings in *Der Herrscher* (best actor); Bette Davis in *Marked Woman* (best actress); *Winterset* (best photography).

B.F.I. GOVERNING BODY

The constitution of the Governing Body of the British Film Institute is now as follows: Sir Charles Cleland, K.B.E., M.V.O., LL.D. (Chairman-Elect); *representing the film trade*, Mr. F. W. Baker (nominated by the Kine-matograph Renters Society), Mr. W. R. Fuller (nominated by the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association), Mr. M. Neville Kearney (nominated by the Film Group of the Federation of British Industries); *representing the educational world*, Mr. R. S. Lambert, M.A. (nominated by the British Institute of Adult Education), Mr. F. Mander, M.A., B.Sc. (nominated by the Royal Society of Teachers), Dr. J. E. Smart, M.C., M.A., B.Sc. (nominated by the Association of Education Committees); *representing the general public*, the Hon. Eleanor Plumer (nominated by the Secretary of State for Home Affairs), Sir Charles M. Barclay-Harvey, M.P. (nominated by the Secretary of State for Scotland), Captain Sir William Brass, M.P. (nominated by the President of the Board of Trade).

PROGRESS IN THE PROVINCES

ITS FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT shows that the British Film Institute continues to grow in strength and usefulness. Its membership has increased from 597 full members on June 30th, 1936, to 769 full members on June 30th, 1937. It is important that a high proportion of these new members come from organised bodies who have found that the expenditure of a guinea, or five guineas, a year from their funds is justified by the services which they obtain in return from the Institute. This is the direction in which we feel that the Institute would be well advised to continue to develop. One of its primary functions should be to act as a co-ordinative body not so much of individual as of corporate effort. Its membership, therefore, should comprehend a high proportion of organisations through whom and with whom sustained effort can be maintained, so as to ensure the best possible use and development of the cinematograph as a means of entertainment and instruction.

A further indication of the manner in which the Governors are seeking to increase the scope and effectiveness of the Institute is to be found in the section of the Annual Report devoted to Area Film Councils.

"The Governors' policy in respect of their external organisation," it says, "is to encourage the formation of Area Film Councils which should be miniature counterparts of the Institute itself. Their work should be mainly co-ordinative, and they should form the natural centre from which the film life of the community is directed and controlled. Eventually the Governors hope to see such Film Councils established in all the great centres of population and in the regions into which the country can be geographically divided."

A Scottish Film Council is already in existence and has behind it three years of successful work, so successful, in fact, that a full time secretary and offices are now necessary. These will enable the Scottish Film Council to repay, in greater measure, the debt which it owes to the Scottish Educational Film Association and the film societies in Scotland, whose prior existence made the formation of the Council possible and whose continued support has largely contributed to its success. The Council is a practical example of the way in which an Area Film Council can promote the welfare of individual societies, and can itself become a powerful organisation influencing the whole of the region in which it is established. South of the Border the nuclei of Area Film Councils are to be found in the Film Institute Societies. From the Merseyside, Manchester and Salford branches, for example, a North-Western

Film Council could originate. Similarly, now that there are in Yorkshire, Film Institute Societies in Bradford, Leeds and York, a Yorkshire Film Council becomes a possibility. In the comparatively near future others should spring up in Wales, London, the North-East and the South-West; and in due course the other areas of Britain must be covered.

If Area Film Councils were an effective reality the provision in public cinemas of programmes specifically designed for children would present less difficulties than it does to-day. At the Conference on Films for Children last November, to which the Report calls attention as one of the principal events of the year, members of the film trade inveighed bitterly against the lack of support which they encountered. Many public spirited exhibitors have gone to great trouble to try to arrange film programmes suitable for children. They have appealed for assistance to the educational world and the social organisations. But not a finger was lifted to help them. Maybe it was thought that these exhibitors were merely exploiting a commercial idea. This is untrue. One point that became abundantly clear as the Institute Conference proceeded was that the organisers of children's matinees have to consider themselves fortunate when they cover expenses. From London the Film Institute and the head offices of the social organisations, who wish to see properly organised children's matinées a feature of our national life, are doing what they can. *A First List of Films Recommended for Children* has been published and distributed widely. The Institute is attempting a census of cinemas where matinées regularly take place. But without local stimulation such efforts from afar are not wholly effective. Area Film Councils would make all the difference.

Area Film Councils would be useful in developing another of the Institute's activities of which the Annual Report makes mention. On April 13th, the Parliamentary Secretary of the Board of Education received a deputation from the British Film Institute. The result of the meeting was to forge new links between the Board and the Institute. One positive proposal was that the Institute should organise a series of regional conferences with Local Education Authorities in order to prove to them that the experimental period in the use of the film for educational purposes has come to an end; that the administrative problems involved in the use of the film in the schools are not insuperable; and last but not least that the teaching profession would welcome the opportunity of using this new aid to educational aid which science has put into their hands. The first of

these conferences is scheduled to take place in Manchester at the end of the present month. Another will take place in Leeds next year. The existence of Area Film Councils could ensure that the interest aroused by conferences of this nature was not allowed to die an early death.

The Annual Report shows that so far as the use of the film for education is concerned, the Institute is within sight of one of its objectives. The publication of reports on the use of the film for teaching history, science and modern languages is significant. None of these, the Institute would be the first to admit, is the last word on the subject. They will, nevertheless, set people's minds working and show the educationists where further research into teaching technique should be conducted and the producers what new films are desired. In this connection the Report makes the point that the most urgent need in film supply is the provision of films suitable for children of eleven to fourteen years. This suggestion in view of the new Education Act must not be allowed to fall on stony ground.

In the consideration of the year's work of the Institute one last point remains to be considered, and that is the National Film Library. The growing importance of the Library is indicated by the fact that the official colour films of the Coronation were sent to it for permanent preserva-

tion. Outside America, it has now the best records in the world of contemporary history and of the development of the film. The next and urgent stage is to secure sufficient money to ensure that the films in the preservation section are accorded the minimum treatment necessary if permanent images are to be retained on the film, and to enable copies of important old films to be printed for showing to film societies and similar bodies, which are becoming increasingly interested in the history of the cinema. Of the Loan Section all that need be said by way of comment on its work is that it seems to be fulfilling a definite need, in that though it is unadvertised and started work after the school year had commenced, films from the Library were lent 450 times to schools and other organisations who wanted them for educational purposes.

The Institute is setting itself a hot pace. We hope that it will be maintained during the coming year. The new constitution by which the "public interest" Governors are now nominated by the Home Office, the Board of Trade and the Scottish Office, increases the Institute's status. We believe that when the next Annual Report comes to be read the Institute, firmly based on the support and co-operation of effective organisations throughout the country, will be found to be approaching, year by year, a fuller realisation of the objects for which it was established.

THE HEALTH OF THE NATION

THE NATIONAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN was inaugurated by the Prime Minister on September 30th. In this Campaign there is no medium which could be more effectively used than the cinema. The screens of 4,000 theatres and those that can be erected in 100,000 schools and halls are nation-wide hoardings which can speak to tens of millions every week. Films are unrivalled in their power of vivid reporting, accurate instruction and emotional appeal. Already films exist whose value has been proved. There are films on physical exercise and recreations, on swimming, football and tennis; on particular health campaigns in connection with tuberculosis, teeth and maternity and child welfare; and on some of the essential prerequisites to a healthy nation, housing and slum clearance, balanced diets and efficient cooking. There are, moreover, many other films on the natural beauties and pleasures of the English countryside, on walking, camping and climbing which could be effectively used to promote the aims of the Campaign.

These films vary in their approach and in their suitability for presentation in public cinemas but they represent the different types of films which could be used. Few of them were made with the objects of the Campaign in mind and there is room and, indeed, a need for more films and for films on specific aspects of the Campaign as outlined by the Prime Minister in his inaugural speech.

It should be possible, for example, to produce films which would help to overcome ignorance about the health services which are available and the reluctance, for whatever reason, of people to make use of them. It would be desirable, as has been suggested by the Physical Education Committee of the British Film Institute to the National Advisory Council, that, when there is a national effort to encourage physical exercise, films should be made showing the most valuable and effective forms of physical exercise and thereby discouraging other forms which might do more harm than good.

Commercial production of the films will be largely conditioned by the amount of distribution for and exhibition in public cinemas which can be obtained for them. A great responsibility therefore rests on the cinemas to play their part in an important national movement by finding screen time for films which would be both entertaining and instructive. Complementary to this avenue of production and exhibition there are the schools and halls of the country which are equipped with projection apparatus or in which it could be installed. In both fields lies a unique opportunity for others to follow the example already set by a number of public-spirited businesses and industries to make a contribution, out of all proportion to the expenditure involved, to the health of the nation.

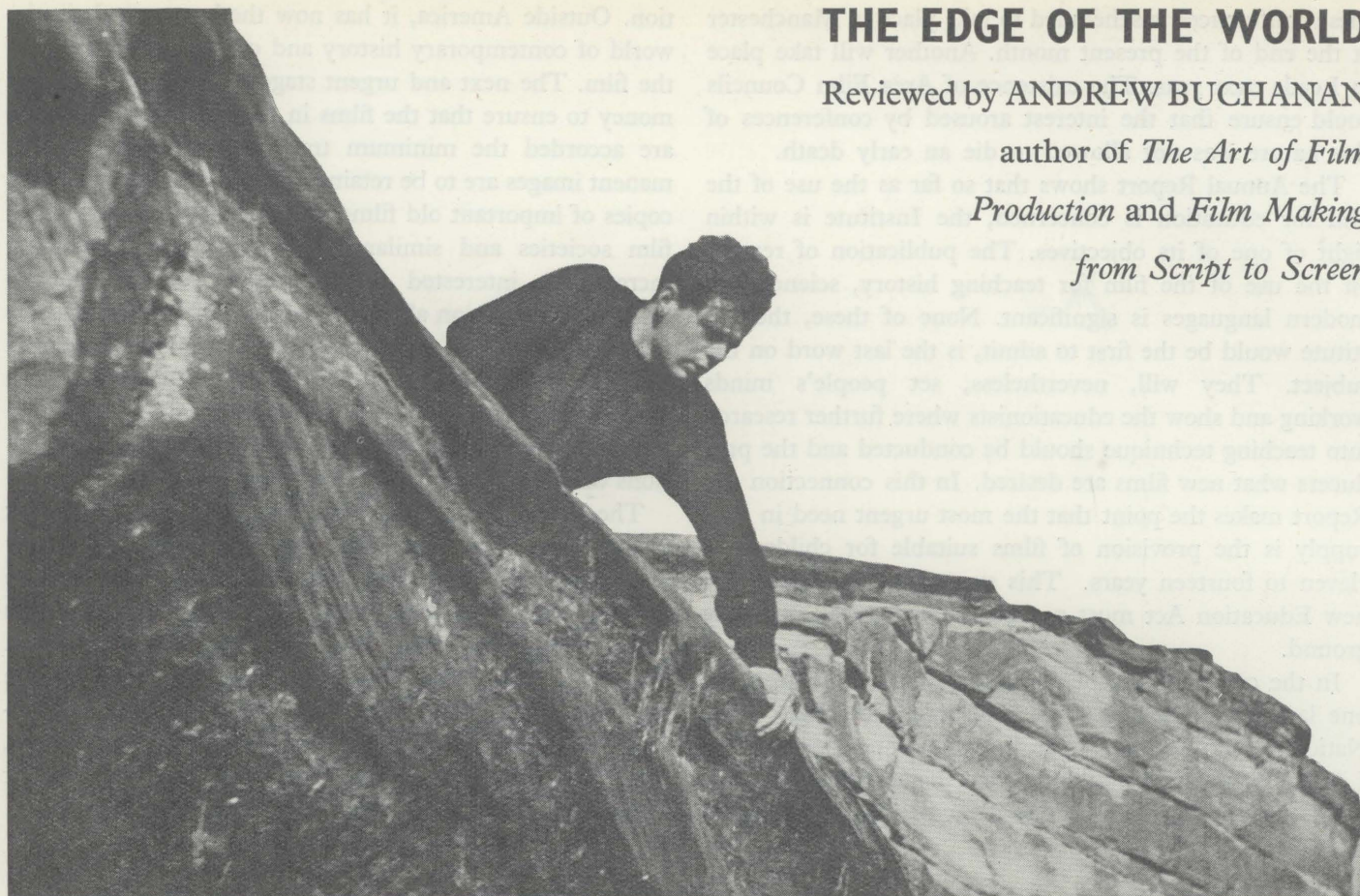
THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

Reviewed by ANDREW BUCHANAN

author of *The Art of Film*

Production and Film Making

from Script to Screen



The Edge of the World was produced by Joe Rock Studios, Elstree, and is distributed by British Independent Exhibitors. Michael Powell wrote and directed it; the cameraman was Ernest Palmer; the cast includes the people of Foula, and John Laurie, Finlay Currie, Niall Macginnis, Eric Berry and Belle Crystall

IN THE FILM WORLD events follow each other with such rapidity that no book can hope to do justice, at any given moment, to the latest unending stream of Epics, Masterpieces and Unparalleled Sensations. But there are really so few events of fundamental importance that it should be possible to keep abreast of them in one volume, covering, say, a year. Even this, it now appears, cannot always be done. A book of mine was published recently, which strongly advocates the development of the Fictional-Documentary film, and yet, believe it or not, its pages contain no reference to *The Edge of the World*, probably the finest example of this type of production, which has appeared almost simultaneously with the book. This picture puts into practice, so concisely, exactly the principles I have outlined, that one might feel there had been collaboration between Michael Powell and myself, whereas I have not seen him for over two years.

Now it is not my intention to assume the rôle of film critic in this article, but rather to deal broadly with the importance, particularly to the British film industry, of Fictional-Documentary production generally, and *The Edge of the World* in particular. Briefly, a documentary picture approaches nearer to pure filmic expression than anything else, revealing the unique strength of the medium, and the opportunities it is offering. Moreover, it is the type of pro-

duction at which we, in Britain, excel. But, parallel with our documentary success is our failure to produce fictional features on a sound financial basis, primarily, because our extravagant system is an exact replica of Hollywood's method, which is practical there, but out of the question here. Is it not logical, therefore, to extend the work at which we excel into the field in which we fail, allowing it to influence and rationalise fictional production? Documentary film-making is amazingly economical, whereas studio fictional production is unbelievably expensive. However, it is not only for material gain that I have advocated merging the two schools, for, from a national point of view, the British film, *as distinct from the film made in Britain*, should, above all else, present its country of origin.

The Edge of the World proves both the wisdom and the practicability of this principle, for, set against the natural scenery of the Hebrides, romance, thrills and drama are powerfully enacted. This has been done before in Britain, a few times, but never, in my opinion, so successfully. The film begins too slowly, and several of the sequences might be tightened to advantage, but criticism is out of place in view of the achievement. I know nothing about the production, how much it cost, nor how long it took, but I know Powell, and remember his earlier work in *Red Ensign*,

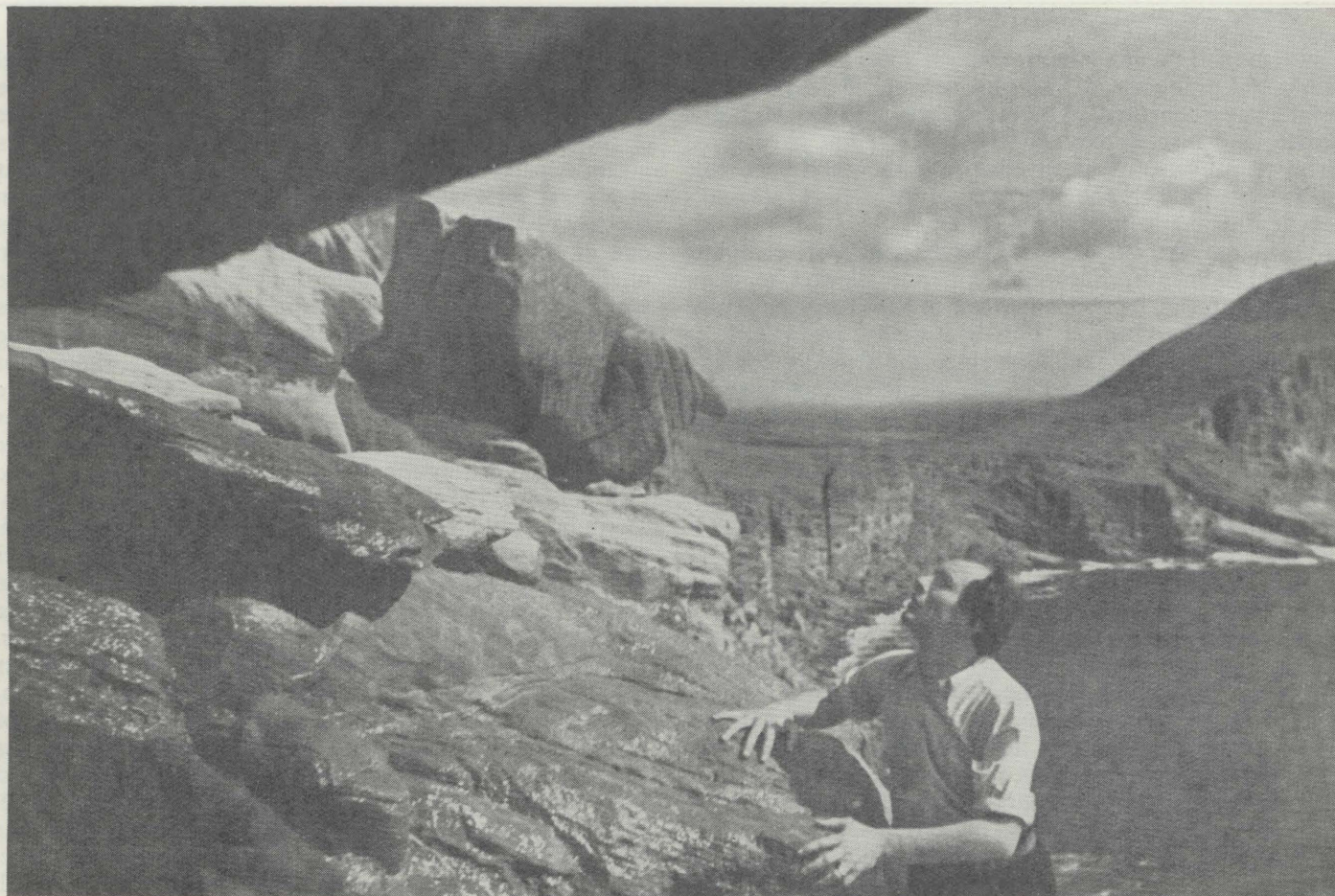
and other films—all of which revealed him as a man capable of grasping the opportunities which reality offers, and moulding them to form the foundations for his stories. But Powell is an exception, because he can handle human beings, and he can also make a first class documentary. Furthermore, he can blend the two to create a perfect whole.

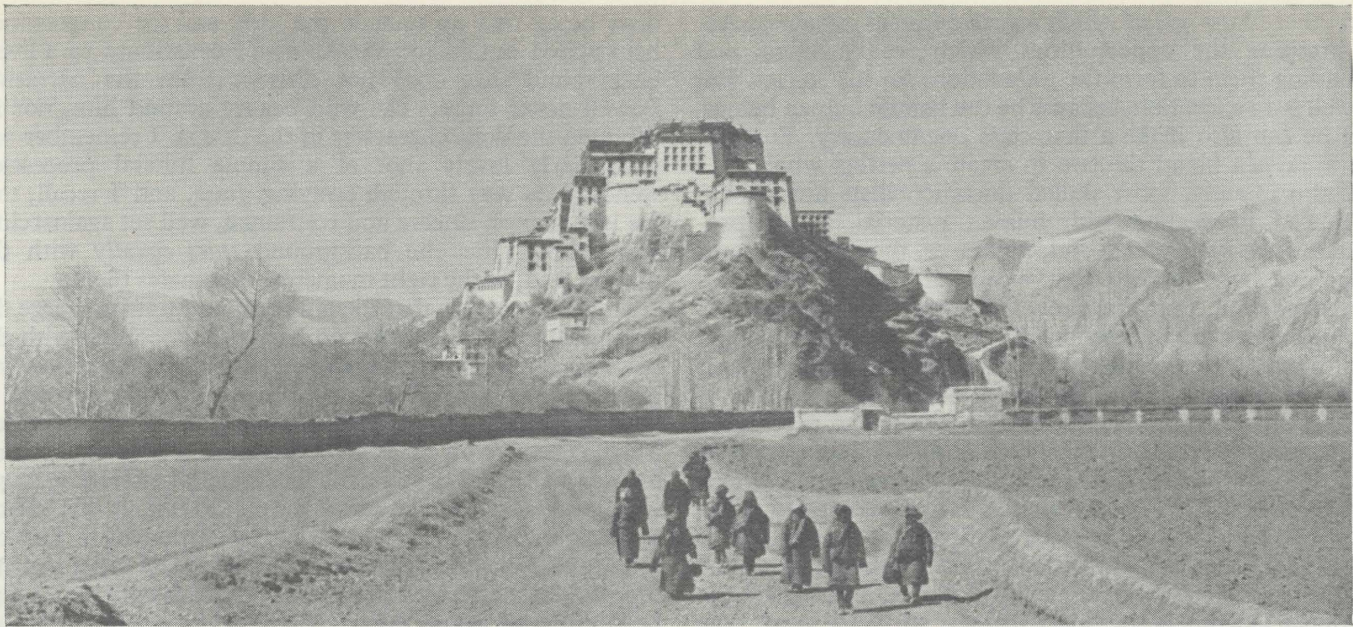
Unfortunately, most skilled documentalists are not experienced in dealing with human material. Their productions are impersonal, and, moreover, they lack humour. You may have noticed that whenever human characters are introduced, they are rarely “produced” to the best advantage. They are too obviously *real* men and women doing *real* things, which would be excellent if they did them as if they really had to. On the other hand, the majority of feature directors can handle human material to perfection, but send them to a foundry, down a mine, or on a trawler, and they are *always* at sea, missing countless glorious opportunities. The documentalist has concentrated upon cogs instead of kisses, and the departure of a train has so excited him that he has overlooked tears being shed on the platform. That is logical up to a point, but when the Fictional-Documentary ideal draws so very near, the documentalist finds himself qualified in one sphere, but quite inexperienced in the other. That fact reveals the unique ability of Michael Powell, who, though not closely identified with the documentary movement, is a supreme documentalist. Throughout his film there are touches revealing his understanding of reality in relation to the screen. His selection of shots, on land and sea; the manner in which he creates his storm without permitting it to drown the entire film; glimpses of peat-digging, rounding up sheep,

dogs being tied up outside the kirk, and the congregation being tired out inside the kirk—all contribute to a lively background that does not distract from the narrative. Powell never forgets the wild beauty around him, nor its effect on the dour characters in the drama. I remember one particularly lovely shot of a simple funeral procession wending its way through swaying grass, and I recall, too, his love scenes, sincere and restrained, well set against cliffs and fields. Thus the background *stars equally* with the players, and, at the right moments, dominates them.

Now it is curious that the only real attempts to merge the documentary film with fiction has been associated with the sea, and staged in remote parts. Flaherty's wild picture was in the Aran Isles; *The Turn of the Tide* was devoted to fisher folk, and now Powell's picture is set in the Hebrides. Maybe the shadow of *Drifters* is hovering over all of them, for it was the first to show the fine material offered by angry seas and tossing trawlers. But we should not, at this critical stage, be tempted to think that only by journeying to the most remote and inconvenient spots can we create stern realistic drama. A director need not be compelled to suffer perpetual hardships and delays every time he seeks to portray actuality. It surrounds him. I should like to see Powell plan his next film around, say, the Sussex Downs, steeped in history, drama and mist. Or in the East End of London, and, perhaps, the West End, including the invisible barrier which divides them.

With *The Edge of the World* the Fictional-Documentary film has arrived. Before it can be developed to its full stature, documentalists must learn to handle fictional characters as well as they now handle factories.





TIBETAN HORIZON

By F. SPENCER CHAPMAN, who went with the recent mission to Lhasa as naturalist and photographer. In 1930-31 and 1931-32 Mr. Chapman went with the Watkins Expeditions to Greenland and was photographer in 1931-32 when the film *Northern Lights* was made

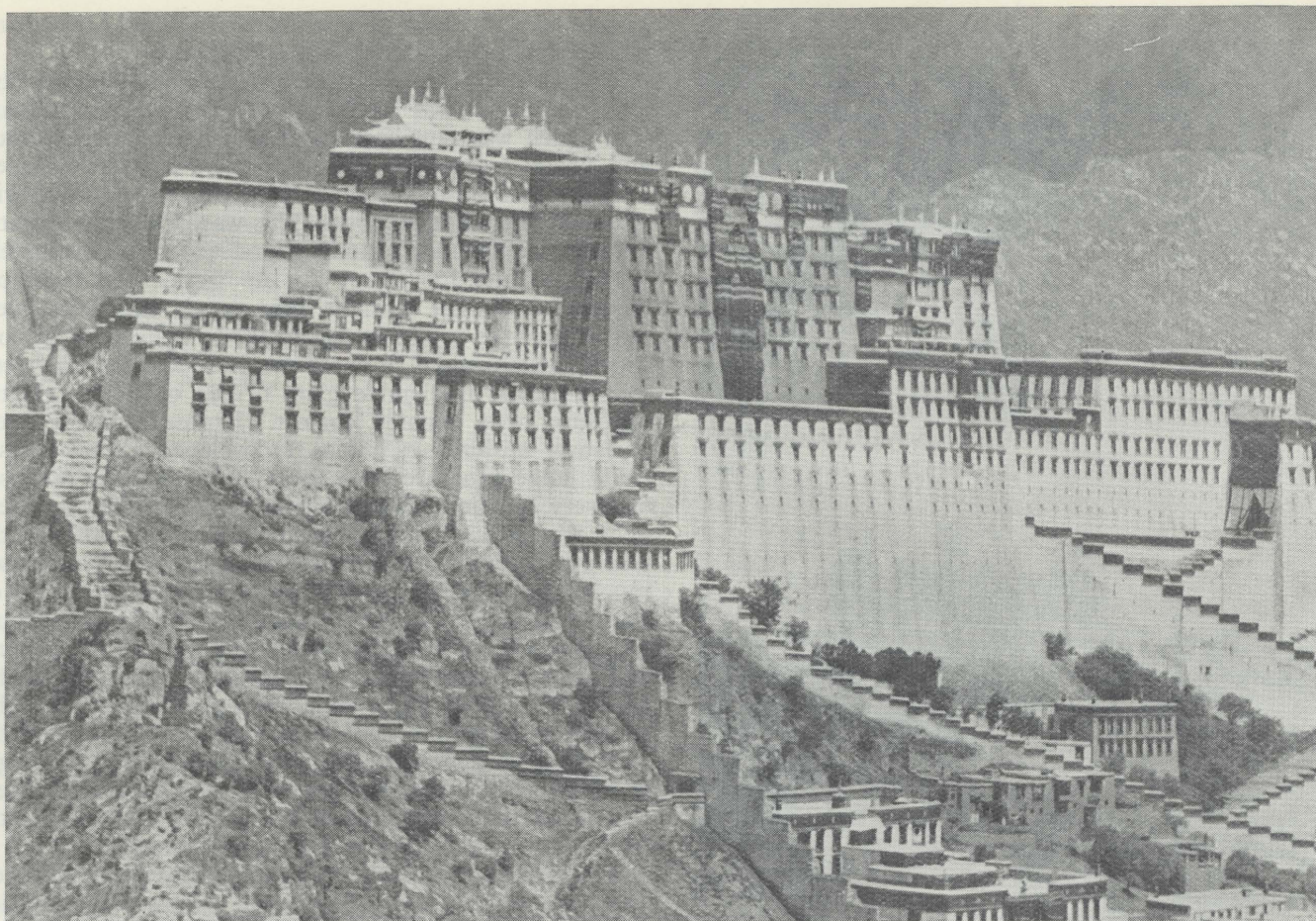
I WONDER if James Hilton ever set foot in Tibet. Certainly the producers of the film version of *Lost Horizon* would have benefited if they had been able to visit this remote and inaccessible country. They might have saved themselves even this inconvenience if they had been able to see the photographic results of Mr. B. J. Gould's recent diplomatic mission to Lhasa.

Owing to the very wise Tibetan policy of excluding Western influence, Europeans are not allowed to enter Tibet except, in limited numbers, to travel up the Trade Route as far as Gyantse. This ban applies particularly to the Holy City of Lhasa. But since the friendly contacts started by the expedition of Sir Francis Younghusband in 1904, and so ably maintained by Sir Charles Bell during his visit in 1920, there have been occasional diplomatic missions at the invitation of the Lhasa government.

In the summer of 1936, Mr. Gould, the Political Officer in Sikkim, was invited to Lhasa. I had the rare fortune to accompany him as his private secretary, and was also in charge of photography and natural history work. As we spent more than six months in Lhasa itself, we had a unique opportunity for photographic work, especially in that as guests of the government we came in contact with all classes of people from the Regent and Prime Minister to the swarthy nomads who, with their flocks of yaks and sheep, range the limitless high plateau of central Tibet. Similarly we were able to visit places, and to witness ceremonies, rarely if ever previously seen by Europeans. The last Dalai Lama—the mysterious priest-ruler of Tibet—died some years ago, and the child in whom the next reincarnation of Buddha is embodied had not then

been found. Consequently the Norbhu Lingka (or Jewel Palace), the summer residence of the Dalai Lamas, could be visited as often as we liked. The Potala, the official residence of the Dalai Lama, was also open to our inspection. This gigantic palace and monastery is built on the summit of a great rock which dominates the level plain whereon the city of Lhasa is built. Though of no specific style it is one of the most striking buildings in the world. From a zig-zag pattern of sloping stone staircases the bare whitewashed walls rise to symmetrical rows of windows like the port-holes of a liner. On the summit of the building are the golden shrines covering the mortal remains of former Dalai Lamas. In a courtyard of the Potala we were the fortunate witnesses of the great Devil Dance that takes place each New Year to drive out the devils that have accumulated during the Old Year. We were also invited to visit some of the great monasteries that surround Lhasa. Drepung and Sera, with over 13,000 monks between them, are like cities—and no mean cities at that; while smaller hermitages, poised at an altitude of some 15,000 feet on some vertiginous hillside, looked even more like stage scenery than many of the monastery scenes in *Lost Horizon*.

Our opportunities were practically unlimited. Altogether I took some 2,500 stills, 3,000 feet of 16 mm. ciné film, 6,000 feet of 16 mm. Kodachrome, and 13,000 feet of 35 mm. film (all silent). One of my greatest difficulties was to work out a scheme for each medium so that I would know exactly what I wanted in standard size, colour ciné, black and white ciné, or stills. There was so much to take that some drastic method of selection was imperative. There was no story to hold the film together, and though





I could take my choice of what there was, I had neither time nor opportunity to arrange any special sets.

The following notes apply only to the standard film. The stock used was Kodak super-sensitive panchromatic film which was sent back by mail runner and pack mule and finally by train to Calcutta where it was developed. I used a Bell Howell camera with a turret head fitted with two inch and six inch lenses. This was invariably operated from a Thalhammer panotilt tripod which, unfortunately, proved a little too flimsy for its work. The technical, climatic, and what I might term social, difficulties, were not as great as might be expected. In spite of light conditions which varied from the tropical gloom of the forests to the almost intolerable glare of the open plateau, the exposure was usually correct. Exposure-meters were curiously misleading; but as I developed all my stills I could judge exposure from these. A yellow filter was used on every occasion when the height would allow it: a lens hood was invariably made use of. At certain times of the year dust storms raged almost every afternoon. This caused much trouble as the cameras had always to be carried on horseback, in yak-hide saddle-bags; and the fine sand would penetrate into all the exposed working parts of the cameras and tripod. No difficulty ensued from the cold as this occurred only at night time during the winter months. As long as I kept the cameras in a warm place at night the oil showed no signs of freezing up. Lhasa itself is at a height of nearly 12,000 feet, and passes of over 16,000 feet were crossed on the journey there. This caused extreme breathlessness and made the use of a tripod essential.

The Tibetans were at first very suspicious of my activities, especially with the more formidable 35 mm. camera which directed an immense eye at them and made an unusual noise. But when, by using air mail each way, we were able to get the Kodachrome film back from England in time to show the officials moving photographs of themselves in natural colour their enthusiasm knew no bounds and they did all they could to help me.

The Lhasa Tibetans have definitely become "film minded." They would invite us to fearsome luncheon parties which started at eleven o'clock in the morning and went on until we insisted on going, at about six o'clock in the evening. On these occasions we were treated to such delicacies as shark's fins, sea slugs, and "chang," the potent local barley beer, which is poured out by beautiful girls whose prerogative it is to stick pins even into Cabinet Ministers if they are reluctant to drink. In return for this almost embarrassing hospitality we would hold film parties. After our guests had eaten—they took kindly, but without enthusiasm, to English meals—we moved to the largest room of the small Tibetan house in which we lived, a room which the L.C.C. might have licensed to hold an audience of perhaps a dozen. Into this room our guests, with attendant monks, servants, and retainers, would be packed—about fifty or sixty in all. As there was room for only a few chairs, which would be reserved for those of high position, most of the guests had to sit on the floor or stand. Then, using a very ancient ciné projector, run off half a dozen accumulators which had been carried up from India on the backs of mules and yaks, our entertainment would start.

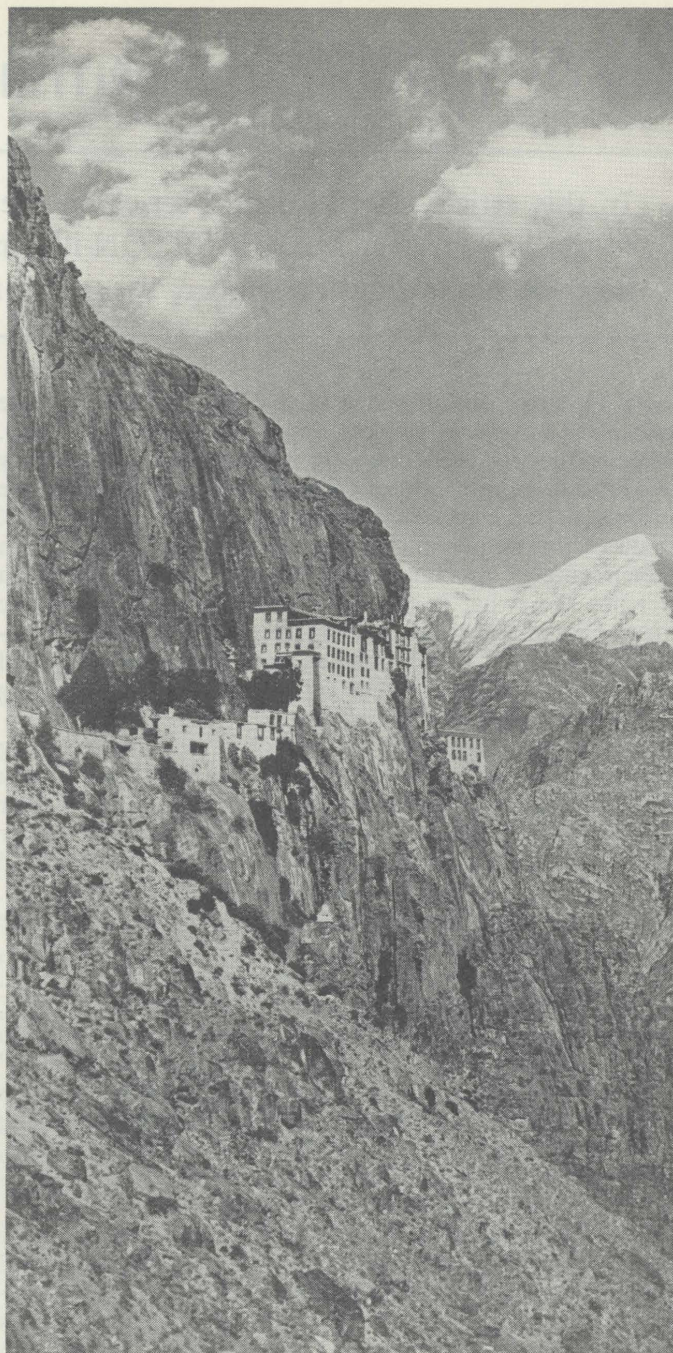
Our programme, set down here in order of popularity, would be as follows: Kodachrome or black and white films of themselves, and Tibetan landscapes taken during our visit: shots of different parts of Tibet were especially interesting as many of the highest officials had never

ventured more than a few miles from Lhasa itself; Rin-tin-tin in *The Night Cry*: a five reeler which appealed to them because of the simplicity of its theme and because it dealt with a subject—sheep farming—which was familiar to them all (our own opinion of this film, after projecting it some dozens of times, will be imagined by anybody who has seen it !); and Charlie Chaplin in some of his earliest successes: *The Crook*, *The Waiter*, *Easy Street*, and *Shanghaiad*. The subtle comedy of dropping ice-creams down old ladies' evening dresses, and hitting unsuspecting people over the head with a mallet, appealed irresistibly to the Tibetan sense of humour, and it was all we could do to keep out "gate crashers" (usually monks or soldiers from the Dalai Lama's guard) who would climb walls or even fight in their efforts to see the performance.

One result of their enthusiasm was that I was invited to witness, and in most cases to film, some of the more intimate processions, ceremonies, and festivals, the gorgeous pageantry of which is so dear to the Eastern mind. I even saw the State Oracle of Tibet go into an official trance before giving his New Year predictions to the Regent.

The film that we were able to take is therefore of considerable anthropological value. You see a synopsis of the day-long Lama Devil Dance at the Potala; acrobatic Kamba dancers and the more homely village mummers; the Regent going on tour with a hundred attendant officials dressed in exquisite brocade robes and ornamented with gold and turquoise insignia. You see the swollen Brahmaputra being crossed in frail yak-hide coracles while the horses swim alongside; and in winter, when the floods have subsided, the same river being crossed in a crazy ferry; while in the background is seen the remains of an iron suspension bridge built by some practical genius of a monk hundreds of years ago. You see the nomads, dressed in a single sheepskin garment, standing before their woven yak-hair tents. Their womenfolk have extraordinary ornaments of amber and coral, and the detail of their head-dress shows—to an expert—from what part of the Tibetan plateau they have come. Street scenes show just how much Western influence has at present crept in. A hydro-electric plant run by a Tibetan official (who, by an extraordinary anachronism, was sent to England by the late Dalai Lama to be educated at Rugby) gives electric light to a few of the more important private houses; policemen, with long plaits and turquoise ear-rings, sit in their sentry boxes sewing boot-soles; cheap Japanese electric-torches, enamel ware, quack medicines, and shoddy cotton materials flood the shops. The crowd scenes show what is to my mind one of the greatest tragedies of modern Tibet: I refer to the Homburg hat. This unsuitable form of head-dress, in all stages of dilapidation, is now worn by practically all classes of Tibetans. It looks fairly incongruous to see a muleteer with a felt hat which he keeps in place by tying his pig-tail over the top of it, but when an official, dressed in a long robe of priceless silk, spoils the whole effect by wearing a cheap Western hat, one feels that it is time a law is passed prohibiting their use. But the Tibetan is tolerant above all else, and one can only rejoice that in winter, at any rate, this form of head-dress is usually too cold.

One thing that seems to impress people who see this film is the phenomenal beauty of Tibetan scenery. I refer not only to things that are lovely in themselves, such as some perfect shots of the exquisite snow peak of Chomolhari, which rises from the level plain to a height of 24,000 feet, but to the normal scenery which forms a background



to these strange dances, gorgeous processions, and even to the street scenes themselves.

This film of Tibet is without plot and without love interest; therefore, according to the usual predictions of the showmen, doomed to be a box-office failure. Fortunately they are often wrong.

THE ILLUSTRATIONS to this article are reproduced by courtesy of Mr. B. J. Gould and Mr. F. Spencer Chapman. *Page 122*: The Potala, seen from the east, dominating the plain on which Lhasa is built. *Page 123, top*: The Potala, seen from the south; *bottom*: Sera Monastery. *Page 124, top*: The devil dance in the courtyard of the Potala; *middle*: Tibetans writing books in an open-air book-shop (note the Homburg hats); *bottom right*: A nomad woman's head-dress; *bottom left*: An official in ceremonial dress. *Page 125*: A mountain hermitage near Lhasa.

THE BRITISH CINEMA 1914

In this article, the third of a series on the history of the British film industry from 1896 to the present day, MARIE SETON illustrates from the film trade press what happened between August and December, 1914. The next article will deal with the years 1915 to 1919

BACK IN THE Neolithic Age of the British Cinema there took place an event of great importance—the Boer War. Films of the war in Africa were in great demand, for they provided a unique opportunity of seeing history in the making, or, at least, from the point of view of one side. Some of the motion picture companies, not content with “documentary” accounts of the struggle, produced cinema sketches somewhat in the spirit of an illustrated patriotic poem. One of these sketches appears as No. 93 in the Hepwix Catalogue. It is described as an animated cartoon, and is entitled *Wiping Something off the Slate*; the something is the power of the Boers in South Africa.

“At the opening of this picture, clouds of smoke rolling away, reveal the figure of a ‘gentleman in khaki’ near a huge slate, on which the word ‘Majuba’ is written, and over which the Boer flag proudly waves. The British soldier tears down this emblem, trampling it under his feet, and goes aside for a moment to fetch some water in his helmet. Then, with the bedraggled, saturated flag, he wipes the offensive word from the slate. He has just finished this, when a shell bursting near wounds him on the temple. Almost fainting, he yet manages to bind up the wound, pick up his rifle, and take up a position at the ‘ready’ in the well-known pose of ‘The Absent-Minded Beggar.’ The wound, however, proves too much, and he staggers and falls just as the Union Jack floats behind him, forming a striking background.” Crude in execution perhaps, but *Wiping Something off the Slate* contains all the ingredients of *The Charge of the Light Brigade*.

After the defeat of the Boers the British cinema industry stored away its potentialities of direct propaganda until England was again embroiled in war. But during the intervening years the status of the film had so risen that its value was recognised by the most august bodies. An interesting article called “The Cinematograph and War,” describing experiments made in England and Germany, appeared in *The Bioscope* on August 20th, 1914. The most significant passage states that “about a year ago (1913) the British Admiralty began making use of the cinematograph as a means of recording the effect of gun fire . . . and the Admiralty has sanctioned (war having been declared) the preparation of a ‘British Navy’ film, being influenced in this way by the effect which the military film (the official British Army picture of 6,000 feet being complete before the outbreak of hostilities) is known to have on recruiting.”

About the same period *The Times* published a letter, from Sir Henry Norman, discussing the subject of how to attract recruits. “An organisation to help recruiting must be an organisation to arouse enthusiasm. And the first and most important factor in that organisation should be the war correspondents,” maintained Sir Henry, “and

with them I would send at least one official cinematographer whose films of the glories of war—we shall all have plenty of other means of learning its sorrows—should be shown in every town and village in the land.”

READY, AYE, READY

The cinema trade was quick to react to the horrors of war. In the first week of August, 1914, Gaumont published this new advertisement for their Chrono Equipment:

“The Austro-Servian War is doubtless responsible for mental pictures of the human conflict now raging. You are participating in an equal struggle for the supremacy of your picture theatre. Mobilization of your Forces is necessary, you must say adieu to the Rank and File of the apparatus market, and insist upon the immediate Entrainment and installation of a 1914 Chrono Equipment which will place you in an unrivalled Strategic Position and enable you to defy the Fury of the Opposing Forces.”

In the second week of August, the City Exclusive Company issued “with commendable enterprise” two topical slides to exhibitors advertising a film called *The Blood of Our Forefathers*. They were inscribed:

“England today calls for heroes. The example of our forefathers, who died fighting, is a timely reminder that we, in our generation, should show the same qualities which are so strikingly portrayed in the film *The Blood of Our Forefathers*. We are showing this exclusively.”

“The spirit of our Forefathers demands that all Englishmen should help stop the aggression of the German ‘Mad Dog.’ God Save the King.”

By September 3rd, the renters were prepared to stand together to fight the enemy. Standard Feature Film Company Ltd. sent forth a battle cry:

“Exhibitors! Stop Booking with German Firms. Be loyal to your countrymen and rally round the standard! If we cannot supply you, there are other English renters who can (send a Post Card, and we will forward you names of Renting Houses owned and controlled by Germans). We thank you for your loyal support, which has brought us such an increase in business that we have been compelled to move to larger premises.”

And this was followed by films calculated to rouse the hounds of war in the heart of any spectator in the cinema who was not already certain of the criminal intent of every German in the country. On September 10th, The Feature Film Supply Company announced *The Great Spy Raid*,

“An episode of the present War with secret service methods employing Carrier Pigeons of the European WAR LORD. The plot is interesting, exciting and exceedingly PATRIOTIC. See the gang of spies arrested in a

Soho restaurant; the attempt to blow up a railway bridge; the captured spy forced to salute the UNION JACK."

If exhibitors, cut off from the turmoil of London, had any doubt that such "entertainment at a time like this is absolutely necessary for the physical and mental health of the people," it rapidly disappeared, and we find the Empire Picture Palace at Hanley telling us that

"The 'Empire' is Awake. Come and See its Brave Sons and Allies preparing to meet the Foe; and a stupendous star programme."

THE WISHES OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

The Boer War, which in comparison with the Great War was little more than a skirmish in the jungle, brought a substantial turnover to the undeveloped cinematographic business. It can be imagined what large profits the now organised and popular trade expected to make from films connected with a European conflagration which affected the family of almost every cinema patron. The week after Britain entered the war a slight panic attacked the film trade at the disquieting rumour that an order had been, or was about to be, issued prohibiting the showing of pictures dealing with the war.

Topical Budget, a news-reel firm of that time, hastily wrote to F. E. Smith, later Lord Birkenhead, of the War Office Press Bureau, stating that:

"Of course, we do not intend to take, and have not attempted to film, any pictures of forts or defences that would be of the slightest use to the enemy; and, furthermore, we should like to state that the whole of our staff are British subjects."

The panic was allayed by an article appearing in the August 20th edition of *The Bioscope* entitled "The Nation's Response."

"We again desire (a denial of the rumour had been printed in the previous issue, August 13th), in the most explicit manner, to emphatically deny the truth of the absurd rumour that the picture theatres will not be allowed to show any war films that may arrive from abroad. . . . Moreover, we believe that arrangements are to be made whereby all topical war films will be supervised by the British Board of Film Censors. No official Government orders of any description have been issued, the authorities very wisely deciding to leave the whole matter to the discretion of the Trade."

It was a useful thing for the trade that the Kinematograph Manufacturers' Association had formed the British Board of Film Censors on January 1st, 1913, for its existence enabled *The Bioscope* to publish on September 3rd, 1914, the following ambiguous warning:

"In conformity with the wishes of the Secretary of State, and of the Press Bureau, the British Board of Film Censors has decided, in order to prevent the exhibition of films dealing with the present crisis in an inopportune or improper manner, that during the war all such pictures, whether topical or otherwise, shall be submitted for censorship. The exhibitors are asked to accept this intimation, and to co-operate with the authorities by only showing such films as have been duly certified. By doing so they will ensure themselves . . . against interference from the authorities."

SOME FILMS AUGUST-DECEMBER, 1914

GAUMONT

ENGLAND'S MENACE
HER COUNTRY'S HONOUR
MODERN CRUSADERS
BRITAIN'S BID FOR SUPREMACY
IF ENGLAND WERE INVADED

SAMUELSON

FACING ETERNITY, film of German origin with Henny Porten
THE GREAT EUROPEAN WAR, must be seen to be believed
THE LIFE OF LORD ROBERTS, V.C.

BARKER MOTION PHOTOGRAPHY

BOYS OF THE BULLDOG BREED
SENTINELS OF THE DEEP
THE GREAT NATION'S DEFENDERS
THE MEN BEHIND THE GUNS
THE LOOTERS OF LIEGE
THE GERMAN SPY PERIL
YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU
YOUNG BRITAIN FOILS THE ENEMY
BY THE KAISER'S ORDERS
THEIR ONLY SON
BRAVO KILTIES

BRITISH AND COLONIAL

ANSWERING THE CALL
IT'S A LONG WAY TO TIPPERARY, director, Maurice Elvey
BELLS OF RHEIMS, director, Maurice Elvey
LOSS OF THE "BIRKENHEAD"

LONDON FILM

ENGLAND EXPECTS, directed by George Tucker

CHARLES URBAN'S KINETO

READY, AYE, READY, British Navy
WAR MAP, animated by Percy Smith
A WOMAN SPY OUTWITTED
EXPLOITS OF THE "EMDEN"

CHERRY KEARTON'S WAR TOPICALS

THE AERIAL INVASION
THE WAR AGAINST THE HUNS
THE SHIRKER'S NIGHTMARE, comedy

ECLAIR FILM

THE WAR OF THE SEVEN NATIONS

DISPATCH FILM SERVICE

STOLEN HONOURS
WOE TO THE CONQUERED
MOTHER OF MEN

JURY'S IMPERIAL PICTURES

FOR THE KING
BRITAIN'S CALL TO NATIONS

FENNING FILM SERVICE

BOOTLE'S BABY

CLARENDON FILM

THE ENEMY IN OUR MIDST

DAVISON'S FILM SALES

WAR'S GRIM REALITY

WAR OFFICE FILM

GERMANY IN WORD AND DEED

CARTOONS

Tempest-Bamforth's TOPICAL CARTOONS
Studdy's War Studies, BILL'S JOY RIDE
Harry Furniss, PEACE AND WAR PENCILLINGS

Another aspect of patriotic (and business) fervour is revealed by the appearance in *The Bioscope* on September 10th, of an article calling upon the trade to wage war against the German film industry. It declared that:

"Although the first duty of every patriot who is able and fitted to do so is to serve his country at the front, there nevertheless remains a duty, not so very far behind the other in importance, and almost equally harassing to the enemy, to be fulfilled by every Briton who is still a civilian. This duty is to assist in the great campaign which is now being waged against German commerce . . . Although the German cinematograph trade is not of great dimensions, it is our duty to capture whatever there is of it and to divert the profits resulting therefrom into British or friendly channels . . . If the name of every German-owned or German-capitalised firm can be removed from the books of every business house in this country, we shall inflict upon our enemy a defeat as severe and crushing as any he will endure from our gallant forces at the front."

One week later *The Bioscope* shows us at least one way in which German trade could be hindered—by the help of the Patents, Designs and Trade Marks (Temporary Rules) Act:

"under which the Board of Trade has power to license British firms to use the registered trade marks of German and Austrian subjects . . . (This) provides British manufacturers with an excellent opportunity of securing a portion of German trade."

But under another act soon introduced—the Trading with the Enemy Act—the trade was, within two months, suffering from the trade boycott which it had so confidently declared and in *The Bioscope*, on November 12th, we read that it is:

"unfortunate that the Act leaves the legal definition of an 'alien enemy' entirely to one's own interpretation. This is all the more unfortunate in that a great many well-meaning people are inclined to regard any firm or limited liability company, incorporated in Great Britain, the capital of which has been subscribed by Germans or Austrians, as alien enemies, and refuse to deal or trade with them in any way. It is, of course, a somewhat limited and narrow point of view, especially in the case of picture theatre companies, which although perhaps of German origin . . . employ many hundreds of British workers . . . It certainly appears to us that trading with the enemy must be taken as applying only to firms operating in Germany and Austria . . . as it cannot be contended that we are deliberately assisting the enemy in having business relations with a company incorporated to trade in this country so long as such licence remains unrevoked."

On December 3rd, *The Bioscope*, apparently forgetting its own outburst at the beginning of September, declares:

"Few level-headed people have felt much sympathy for the unreasoning campaign against German companies operating in this country recently entered into by a certain, more or less irresponsible, section of the daily press (*appearing weekly, the Bioscope is presumably exempt from irresponsibility*). It is doubtless largely owing to the attitude adopted by these papers that the Trading with the

Enemy Act has been misinterpreted in many quarters, and notably so by the London County Council in the matter of picture theatre licences.

"It is neither desirable nor just, in the first place, that Germans who have been law-abiding residents in this country for many years, and who are often 'alien enemies' in a technical sense only, should have their means of livelihood suddenly and completely confiscated, although it is, of course, essential that they should be placed under official supervision for the time being. It is still more undesirable and unjust . . . that thoroughly British subjects, employed by alien or partly alien firms, should be thrown out of employment at a most critical moment. . . . Such tactics are not only against international law . . . they are opposed to the best interests of our own country's economic welfare, and are very much akin to cutting off one's nose to spite one's face."

A fortnight later the trade papers made a still more remarkable discovery:

"That the British film industry will ever become a solely British affair is as inconceivable as it is undesirable. The extraordinary facilities offered by the cinematograph for the ready exchange between nations of artistic achievement and ideas constitute one of the most fascinating and valuable qualities of the wonderful instrument . . ."

The trade war was defeated by economic necessity within two months, and the editorials and leading articles in the trade press dropped their patriotism like a hot brick and returned to their usual business topics.

AFTER THE FIRST FLUSH

The film trade had more urgent problems: how would a prolonged war affect audiences and what films would they want? An article outlining the "duty" of film manufacturers and exhibitors towards the public, written by Evan Strong, appeared in *The Bioscope* on August 27th:

"There is every prospect that, instead of the anticipated slump in the cinema patronage, there will be a great fillip to public interest in motion pictures. The reasons are psychological and simple. In time of stress, when the public is labouring under great nervous strain, the people look for some moderate form of relaxation . . . Just now, curiosity and interest aroused, the public is crowding to picture shows and clamouring for war pictures. The managers have gone all out to rake up anything having a bearing on war, while manufacturers and agents are feverishly putting to the fore any and all pictures with the faintest smell of powder or the rumble of guns. They are right . . . (but) in three months' time when the first flush of the campaign has died down . . . the people will look for something to carry their thoughts away from war and the horrors of the battlefield, and an antidote, a counter-attraction, will be demanded . . . Our friend 'relaxation' will be seen at work . . . and the people waiting, waiting, in their solitude, or comparative solitude, having nothing but war in their minds, will turn to the picture theatres for relief. The cinemas must be ready to cater for them with the proper 'stuff' . . ."

And as one man the cinema industry began after three months to produce the antidote as quickly as they had manufactured the poison.

THE CINEMA IN SCANDINAVIA

A short survey by H. FORSYTH HARDY, film critic to *The Scotsman*, of film-making and film-going today in Sweden, Norway and Denmark; to be completed in another article in the next issue of SIGHT AND SOUND

I WENT TO SCANDINAVIA with what I imagine is the average film student's knowledge of its cinema: a fading memory of the Swedish films which, in the years immediately following the war, were acknowledged to be first in intelligence, force and imaginative zeal, and which made a distinctive national contribution to film progress; an instinctive respect for the names of Mauritz Stiller and Victor Sjöström deriving more from their Swedish productions than the films they made later in Hollywood; and, since the sound film, only the slim information afforded by *En Natt* and *Fredlös*. I wanted to find answers to some obvious questions. Was there any production in Sweden to compare with the early days? Had the mood of sombre splendour and poetic fervour changed? Was *Fredlös* characteristic of the everyday Danish film? Were there Norwegian films?

After about a month's study of these questions, I have come to the conclusion that belittling references to the Scandinavian cinema are unjustified. In Sweden something does remain of the sincerity, force and craftsmanship of the great days of Stiller and Sjöström. Film-making there appears to be conducted and controlled with a spirit and intelligence noticeably lacking from the cinemas of certain larger countries. In Norway there is a new desire to produce films of a distinctive national quality and, however successful its realisation, that is an ambition quite remarkable in a small country. Denmark appears at the moment to be concerned more with quantity than quality, but here also the films reflect something of the life of the people, and film-making is intelligently organised to meet the enter-

tainment demands of a light-hearted nation. Neither in the studios nor in the picture-theatres of Scandinavia is the American cinema the dominating influence it is in this country.

NATIONAL FILM PRODUCTION

The countries must in many respects be treated separately but generalisation is possible to some extent. Most obvious is the economic situation. Here are three small populations (Sweden about six million, Denmark about four and Norway about three) with languages which are not understood outside the Scandinavian borders. Under modern conditions of film trade, therefore, the market for a Scandinavian film is exceedingly limited. There is interchange to some extent between the three countries and a few films reach Finland; but, for the most part, the producer must get his return from the cinemas of his own country. In Sweden the maximum cost of a film cannot be more than about £10,000, and in Denmark about £7,500. On this basis a small working profit can be made; but if these figures are exceeded loss is inevitable. This financial limitation has not had a bad influence on production. Admittedly it has cramped ambition, restricted outlay on personnel, settings and costumes and made it difficult to retain directors and players when Hollywood has beckoned. But against this may be set a stabilising influence. When potential profit is so small, there is no temptation to money-grabbers, men drawn into the industry in the hope of making a pile quickly and getting out. No unsettling apparition of an "American market" hovers in the background! Film-



Värmlänningarna, a folk film, directed by Gustaf Edgren



makers in Scandinavia are not paid fantastic salaries. They must have a natural fondness for their craft and be content with the simple but satisfying pleasures of the craftsman in work well done. The conditions generally invite co-operative effort in a common interest.

INTERNATIONAL SCREENS

So much for generalisation on film-making. Film-going in Scandinavia is much more varied and exciting than it is in this country. America may contribute the majority of the films shown; but there is widespread distribution also for films from France, Germany, Britain and Austria, while productions from Russia, Hungary, Italy, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and Estonia may also be seen. As only the best of the American films are imported, film-going is not made tedious with the dross of the Hollywood movie. Only the most successful films from other production centres are also brought into the country, so that regular film-going can be maintained at a high level. Quite apart from the fascinating contacts which it supplies with the cinemas of many countries, this screen internationalism is much healthier than the monotonous British-American monopoly to which we are accustomed in this country. The Scandinavians are brought constantly into touch with European ideas, customs, culture. They hear other languages and see other peoples. The film may not always present a reliable or realistic national picture (consider the average British production or the propagandist films from Russia or Germany); but the sum total of the effect must be much more illuminating than the constant drenching with American ideas undergone by film-goers in this country.

One other minor generalisation about film-going. Single-feature programmes are the rule throughout Scandinavia. In probably the majority of cinemas the feature is accompanied by a newsreel and occasionally (particularly in Sweden) by a short documentary or travel film. I could discover no demand for double-feature programmes. Longer programmes, incidentally, would be a physical impossibility, from the audience's point of view. The well-sprung, cushioned seat familiar even in modest British cinemas is unknown in Scandinavia. I was told that in the

newest cinemas standards of comfort in this respect have improved; but throughout the visit I was unable to find a cushioned seat. I should add that the decoration of the cinemas is on a less primitive plane. Interiors, especially in Stockholm, revealed taste and imagination.

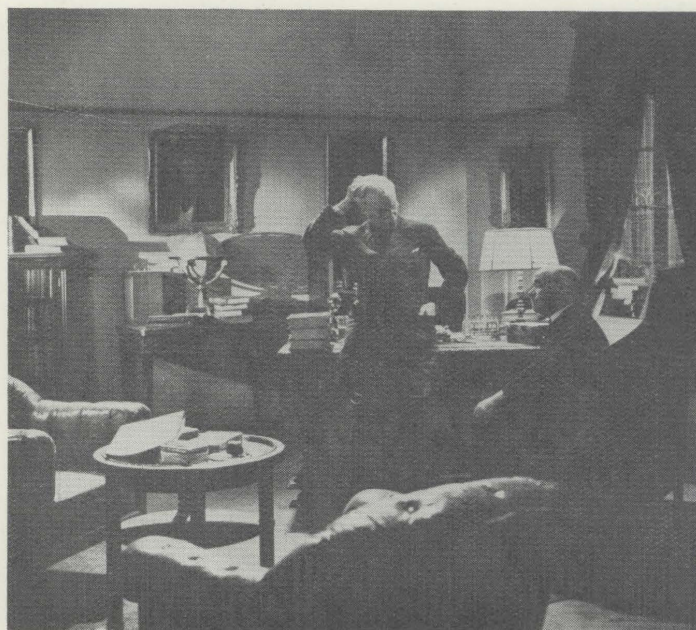
SWEDEN: CINEMAS AND FILM-GOERS

In Sweden film-going is increasing. The people are prosperous, if not wealthy, and by nature fond of enjoyment. As a medium for meeting that demand, the cinema takes its place with the restaurant, the concert hall and the theatre. At the end of 1936 there were about 1,650 cinemas equipped for sound—a considerable total for a comparatively small country. Two factors, however, must be taken into consideration. Approximately 400 of the cinemas in country districts operate only from one to three times a week and in several cases the sound apparatus is transported from cinema to cinema. Also the cinemas are small in comparison with British standards, the accommodation, even in the cities, seldom exceeding 1,000. Comprehensive film-going statistics are difficult to secure, but what figures are obtainable indicate a rising attendance graph.

Film production is also increasing. In 1935 twenty-seven feature films were produced. This year the total is expected to reach forty. Both exhibition and production are dominated by Svensk Filmindustri, which owns the studios at Råsunda, has a chain of over a hundred cinemas and supplies the programmes for about five hundred others. The company had its origin in a small provincial town, Kristianstad, in the south of Sweden, in 1907. In 1911 it moved to Stockholm and built the first Swedish film studio where, the following year, Victor Sjöström directed *Ingeborg Holm*, one of the first of the productions which were to create a new film tradition. In 1919 large new studios were built at Råsunda. It was here that Sjöström made his later films and Mauritz Stiller directed *Arne's Treasure* and Greta Garbo in *The Atonement of Gösta Berling*.

SWEDISH FILM PRODUCTION

The trends which characterised production at that time have not disappeared from the Swedish cinema. The



Swedenhielms, a drama with a psychological theme, directed by Gustaf Molander

lyrical use of natural backgrounds, for example, appears again in *Värmlänningarna* which, produced a few years ago, is set in Värmland, the romantic district whence come many of Sweden's poets. It is essentially a folk film and its account, based on a traditional story, of the love of a rich landowner's son for a poor crofter's daughter, draws much in atmosphere from shots of light playing on trees, mist over the earth and slight figures against snow. Watching it I felt with C. A. Lejeune that "the old personification of the elements has never quite left the Scandinavian mind, and wind, wood, water, is still alive: light and darkness are still elementals."

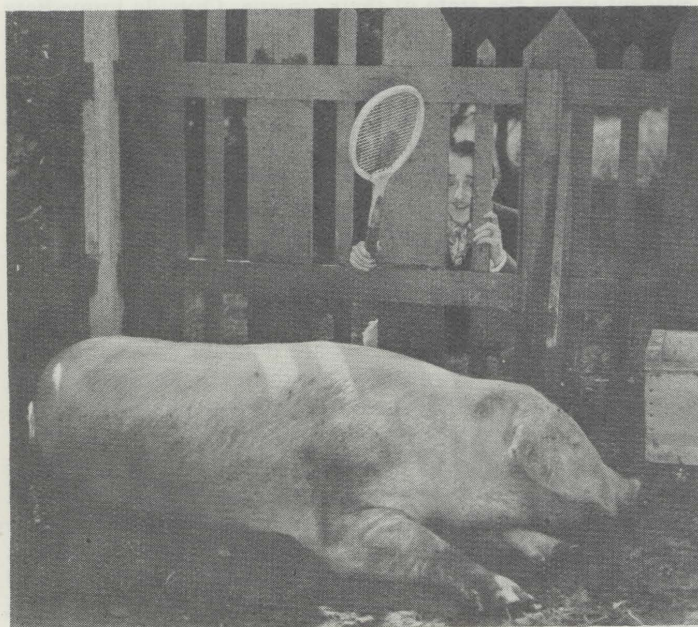
Characteristic also of the Swedish cinema's traditional concern with heavy psychological themes is a more recent production, *Swedenhielms*. Directed by Gustaf Molander (remembered for *En Natt*), this describes the predicament of a Swedish scientist who cannot accept the Nobel Prize he has won as he fears that his spendthrift son, a naval lieutenant, is about to be exposed as a forger. Molander's fine firm direction and his sensitive control of players who include Gösta Ekman, Sweden's leading actor, give the film sincerity and distinction. Its story, acting and technical qualities compare favourably with the best work from the major producing countries.

Contemporary Swedish production would be misrepresented, however, if it were suggested that most films fall into these two categories. A pleasure-loving people demands light-hearted films, and probably the bulk of production is on this plane. Typical of these lighter films is *Sara lär sig Folkvett*, a comedy written by Gösta Stevens, directed by Gustaf Molander and starring Tutta Rolf as a servant girl in love with the son of the house. The tale of the effect on the romance of a fortune to which the servant falls heir may be flimsy, but the treatment skilfully brings out its comic quality, the acting is spirited, the direction fluent and the technical qualities first-rate. An interpolated fantastic sequence both underlines the director's movie sense and introduces the characteristic Scandinavian fairytale element. I saw a film of this type in production when I visited the studios. It was an adaptation of "Summer

Lightning," by P. G. Wodehouse, whose humour appeals strongly to the Scandinavians and whose American films have been very popular there. It has been given a Swedish background: Empress, the sow who plays a prominent part in the story, now luxuriates in a characteristically decorative Swedish sty.

The most ambitious Swedish production of the year is a film dealing with the life of the Swedish-American inventor and naval engineer, John Ericsson (1803-89). The scene shifts from Sweden to England and later to America and the story will show how his screw-propeller revolutionised ship construction and how his armoured turret ship, the "Monitor," countered the menace of the "Merrimac" and made a vital contribution to the termination of the American Civil War. One reason for the production of the film at this time is that its completion will coincide with the celebration of the centenary of the Swedish settlement on the Delaware River. From what I saw of its production this film ought to achieve a success which will re-introduce the Swedish cinema to a wider world audience.

The rôle of the inventor is being played by Victor Sjöström, acting again, after an interval of some twenty-five years, for the company with which he started his film career. Acting is not a new experience for him as he appeared in several films in the early days. Among the players and technicians he was regarded with the respect due to one of the great figures of the world cinema: the young actress playing the heroine would curtsy towards him as she came on the set. The film is being directed by Gustaf Edgren (*Värmlänningarna*) and includes in its cast another director, Anders Henriksson, whom I had seen the previous day on the Wodehouse film set. A production of this kind throws special responsibilities on the art director, and Arne Akermarck, who has been responsible for the distinctive *décor* of the Svensk Filmindustri's productions during the past eight years, has devoted much effort to research on the life and activities of Ericsson. On the desk in his studio were strewn sketches of ships and engines and above it was a model of the "Monitor" to be used in the film by Ericsson for demonstrating his ideas.



A comedy based on *Summer Lightning* by P. G. Wodehouse, directed by Anders Henriksson



Scenes from a film of the life of John Ericsson. Victor Sjöström, as Ericsson, is seen in the bottom picture

SWEDISH SHORTS

What surprised me most in Swedish production was the quality of the short films. I had not expected to find a strongly-developed school of short film production which, while it has not yet tackled social problems, in other respects compares favourably with our own. The Svensk Filmindustri has five directors producing shorts, and they have considerable freedom in choosing subject matter and developing style. Knut Martin, director of *Gentlemen in Crowns* and *Gentlemen in Top Hats*, has specialised in films assembled from old news-reels and other historic material of which the company has a rich store. One of his productions, *Minns Du?* (*Do You Remember?*) is composed of excerpts of Swedish films from 1909 until the emergence of the sound film. Martin is at present at work on a *Royal Cavalcade* dealing with Sweden's development during the past thirty years and being prepared specially for the celebrations in connection with the eightieth birthday of King Gustaf V next June. Martin was also the director of two other films I saw: *Solliden, en Drottning's äreminne*, produced in memory of the late Queen Victoria of Sweden; and *Staden som Sportar*, a picturesque record of a day in snow-bound Stockholm, delightfully developed and skilfully photographed.

Another of the short films I saw was *Julotta*, by Gösta Roosling, an account of the early morning service on Christmas Day at a country church. The devotional atmosphere is skilfully set and sustained, and the photography is exceptionally fine. It seems surprising that more of these short films do not reach this country. Here at least the language difficulty could be easily overcome. The company, I should add, recently sent an expedition, with 100,000 feet of negative, under Paul Fejos, to Siam and the Dutch East Indies, where, on Komodo Island, they were attacked by the giant lizards whose life and habits they had come to film. These short films are also used extensively for educational purposes, the school cinema being an established instructional aid in Sweden. Extensive exchange arrangements have been made with other producing countries and recently seventy-five G.-B. Instructional films were acquired for use in Swedish schools.

I must not leave the impression that the Swedes are complacent about the state of their cinema. Outside immediate film circles I heard murmurs of criticism. I was told, for example, that there were too many "Pilsner" films—frothy, frivolous affairs that compared ill with the great achievements of the past. I heard also of a meeting held about a year ago in the Concert Hall in Stockholm, when protest was made about the decline of the Swedish cinema. Critics, authors, journalists, social workers and people prominent in civic life debated and discussed and exhorted until about three in the morning. The particular source of annoyance was a film called *Boarding House Paradise*.

It is not difficult to understand these reactions. In an industry where profit and loss are delicately balanced, the frothy films are probably safest to produce. Criticism of them reflects a natural desire to see the Swedish cinema regain its former prominent position in the world film scheme—a task made complicated more by language barriers than by lack of ability or ambition. The second reported protest suggests a live social sense, a community quick to criticise the appearance of unsavoury elements and anxious to maintain film entertainment on an ambitious social and artistic level. Neither necessarily detracts from the claims I have made. We must no longer refer without reservation to the faded glory of the Swedish cinema.

RUNNING THE EVERYMAN

By J. S. FAIRFAX JONES, Managing Director of the Everyman Cinema Theatre, Hampstead

THE EVERYMAN was opened as a cinema on Boxing Day, 1933. The building first saw the light of day as the Hampstead Drill Hall and Assembly Rooms in the late 'eighties. It was transformed into a theatre shortly after the war (the Great War—not the Boer War) and passed through many changes of fortune. Some of the greatest of modern plays were performed on its stage. Many actors now famous made their bow at the Everyman. It is a matter of theatrical history that Noel Coward's *The Vortex* was first given here. When we took it over it had recently suffered the indignity of having been devoted to Continuous Revue for some weeks. It was dilapidated, derelict, down-and-out.

It cannot be said that any of us associated with the venture had any very special knowledge of the film industry. We were animated with a laudable desire to have a small cinema at which we could give programmes of good films as a matter of regular policy. And we thought that Hampstead would be a very good pitch. My own practical knowledge of exhibiting films was mainly limited to having formed a film society while staying at Southampton and running it for two years. With that amount of practical knowledge plus a great deal of real enthusiasm and rather less than half the amount of capital we subsequently discovered to be the absolute minimum, we took a lease of the building, converted it into a cinema and opened our doors to the public.

Sir Gerald du Maurier presided at the opening ceremony and our first programme consisted of *Le Million*, *Turbulent Timber*, a Mack Sennett comedy, a Disney cartoon and Paramount News. Our policy at that time was to show a series of very different films in an endeavour to find out what the Hampstead public really wanted, and in subsequent weeks we showed *Cimarron*, *Tabu*, *A Bill of Divorcement*, *Jack's the Boy* and *Mädchen in Uniform*. During the whole of that period and for many weeks after, the public stayed away in unprecedented numbers. In the entire week during which we showed *Cimarron* we took at the box office an amount of money which to-day would be regarded as very poor for Saturday alone. It looked as if the prophecy of a Wardour Street salesman who called a week before we opened was right. "I give you six weeks," he said.

EARLY STRUGGLES—THE FIRST YEAR

Looking back on those first months of gloom and depression, I cannot imagine how and why we remained open. With all the tenacity of the hopeless we just went on until suddenly we had our first piece of luck. We were offered and showed *Der Träumende Mund* while Elisabeth Bergner was appearing in the West End (the film had its première before she came to England and had not been revived). For a week there was bedlam at the Everyman. The staff, hitherto delighted if six people came in consecutively within a quarter of an hour, was overwhelmed but not defeated, the road outside was blocked with abandoned cars, seats were booked by the score. This showed us pretty plainly that the audience was there if we had the right film, but even so we did not cover our expenses again until a couple of months later when we revived *The Guardsman* while the

Lunts were enjoying a big success in London. This time we had things pretty well organised. Almost immediately we had a particularly fierce summer on us and although we had one or two pleasing weeks during the following autumn, we finished our first year with a very fat deficit on our profit and loss account. On the credit side, however, we had some hopeful entries. To begin with, adversity is a potent stimulant, and we had drunk deep of it. Our audiences were steadily increasing in numbers, letters of appreciation were beginning to arrive in place of statements of account overdue. The mailing list passed the four figure mark. We were getting a real feeling for the true temper of our audience. In the ninth week of our second year we showed a film prophetically entitled *The Slump is Over*.

So much for the early struggles. I dare say that other cinemas having a policy similar to ours have had similar experiences at the outset, although perhaps not for the same reasons. Our initial mistake was catholicity of selection—too many different kinds of films, not all of the same quality. This policy was dictated by the condition of the film market in 1933 and 1934. At that time there were not so many first-rate films available either from America or Europe as there have been since. We therefore made experiments which did not succeed. Fundamentally, we knew from the beginning precisely what we wanted to do, and when the supply of films became more propitious and the cinema became more widely known, our first conception proved to be the right one.

TODAY'S POLICY AND PROBLEMS

In arranging programmes for the Everyman there are a host of peculiar problems to be considered. In the first place, the public today knows entirely too much about films. The public "shops" for films, using extraordinary discrimination. We have few, if any, patrons who come week after week irrespective of what we are showing. The film is very much the thing with the Everyman audience. And if the film does not reach a special standard or possess certain qualities or facets of particular interest, then they one and all stay away. To compose fifty-two programmes of the essential quality each year is something of a task! So far as continental films are concerned, we have in the nature of things to rely for our supply on those which reach the market after presentation at one of the West End cinemas. If any of these films should be unsuccessful or conversely should run for an abnormal time, then our supply is accordingly held up. For example, during the early part of this year *Mayerling* ran at the Curzon for nearly five months and *La Kermesse Heroïque* ran for even longer. When these circumstances prevail, we have to use our wits.

SEASONS OF FILMS: CLAIR TO SURREALISM

We early hit on the idea of giving "Seasons" of films. A season generally consists of the revival for short consecutive periods of films which we have previously shown individually for a week, the season comprising films which have some connecting link in the shape of a director, star, subject or country of origin. Our first René Clair season given in

December, 1934, was a howling success, twice repeated. The first Marx Brothers season attracted immense audiences—so much so that it was possible to see a Marx Brothers film at almost any one of the London repertory cinemas on any day for months after. Other seasons have illustrated the work of Hitchcock, Pabst, Lang, Paula Wessely, Astaire-Rogers, Capra and W. C. Fields. All of these seasons have been justified except the Fields season, which was a very great failure. On another occasion we arranged a six weeks season under the heading of "A History of the Film" beginning with some of the earliest known films and *The Birth of a Nation*, and finishing, in the sixth week, with a programme of modern films. One of these weeks was a complete fiasco. It was the week describing the evolution of the documentary film and we presented either wholly or in part such notable examples of documentary as *Drifters*, *Turksib*, *Contact* and *Night Mail*. It would have paid us to take a holiday during that week. There must be a moral lurking here for Messrs. Grierson, Rotha and Co.! On the whole we derived the most amusement, shared by press and public alike, from our "Surrealist Programme," given early this year. For the first time we had a première in our own right. We therefore banged our little drum and accorded *Zero de Conduite* a Press Show and a Gala Performance. The repercussions of this programme in various quarters were most interesting. *Zero de Conduite* was clearly conceived and produced in all sincerity, with point and purpose. It accordingly merited serious criticism. All the critics disliked it and expressed their dislike in various ways. Some of them merely slanged it, others tried to puzzle it out, others gave it headlines and smart journalism. The most reasoned and intelligent review came from *The Times* and the most deplorable piece of criticism I think I have ever encountered came from *The Observer*. Miss Lejeune awarded the film a series of facetious noughts without adding one word of reason or explanation. Speaking at the opening performance Basil Wright used the phrase "Zero de Lejeune, or Nought for *The Observer*"—a remark which was greeted with immediate and sympathetic applause. Later in a letter to *World Film News* John Grierson, Alberto Cavalcanti and Maurice Jaubert made a forceful protest against "a distempered and ugly, critical performance".

The upshot was that more people than we thought possible came to see the film and it ran for five weeks. Never before had we had such curious audiences or such curious audience response. Most people disliked *Zero de Conduite*, although almost everybody thought the experimental shorts a very good collection. The programme as a whole was put forward to inform the public about current work in the *avant-garde* field and was accepted by the public in that spirit. But we have to remember that in the main it is the size—or rather lack of size—of the Everyman, which has but 260 seats, which enables us to conduct such experiments with any success. An audience sufficient to pack the Everyman would present a spectacle of pathetic desolation if transferred to any one of the local Odeons.

EXPERIENCE WITH BRITISH FILMS

The subject of British films has ever been a difficult one for us. In common with all cinemas we are obliged by law to show 20 per cent of British films every year. Our programme consists of one long film and a selection of shorts, the whole lasting 2½ hours (this enables us to begin our last

performance of the day at a conveniently late hour). It follows that in one programme out of every five our main attraction must be a British film. The word "attraction" is used here, alas, in a purely technical sense. In the course of our four years at the Everyman we have shown practically every British film of any repute. Out of nearly 50 long British films shown during that period, only three have covered our overhead expenses. In our list of box office receipts during these four years, twelve of the fourteen bottom places are occupied by British films. Patrons have asked us over and over again why we show British films to empty houses. Yet when we recently announced in our mailing card that we did so chiefly because we were under legal compulsion, we were severely castigated by Miss Lejeune who said that such a statement made her sick.

This problem of British films is not peculiar to the Everyman or to the other specialised cinemas: it is common to all. Most of the cinema proprietors with whom I have discussed the subject say that they dread the approach of a British film and invariably make a point of putting the strongest possible American film in the same programme as a counterblast. There are naturally exceptions to this generalisation. The Gracie Fields films, for example, are widely popular and so are those in which George Formby appears. Cinema proprietors do not fear British films because they are British: they fear them because the British public will not come to see them; and I am sure that, if British films equalled others in attractiveness, exhibitors would give them preference when booking.

THE PUBLIC KNOWS WHAT IT WANTS

Recently we tried another experiment in the shape of a plebiscite among the 5,000 people on our mailing list. Patrons were asked to select from a list of films six films which they would like to see again. The film which received most votes was *Mädchen in Uniform* followed by *Kameradschaft*, *Maskerade*, the original version of *Unfinished Symphony*, *Trouble in Paradise*, *The Petrified Forest* and *Turksib*. Over 1,000 voting papers were returned and the programmes so selected resulted in record business for any seven consecutive weeks since we began. Thus we have made the disconcerting but far from surprising discovery that *the public really does know what it wants!*

Of course the public knows what it wants! And it is for that reason that running the Everyman is such a pleasant job. It is my hobby, my spare-time occupation, and I count myself a fortunate man to have it. There are ordinary cinemas, snob cinemas, cut-price cinemas, news cinemas, all sorts of cinemas, but only one Everyman! The audience is incredibly mixed—all nationalities, colours and creeds visit it and make up a clientele which is tremendously critical and at the same time very responsive. To be able to show a tattered copy of a silent film or an early outmoded sound film and attract an audience which knows precisely why that film is being shown is much more satisfying than attracting an audience to see an established success from Paris, Berlin or Hollywood.

At the Everyman we have none of those things considered necessary by the large cinemas—no organs, neon signs, betrousered usherettes and what not. We rely simply on good sound and projection, service to our patrons, and a selection of the best films from all available sources. Play we the organ never so loudly, flash we the neon never so brightly, it is, in the final assessment, the film which counts—a platitude this, but how horribly true!



Peter Lorre in *M*, the famous crime film made by Fritz Lang

Courtesy Everyman Cinema Theatre

CRIME OVER THE WORLD

Notes by ARTHUR VESSELO on the treatment of crime as a film subject in some of the major film-producing countries: Germany, U.S.A., Great Britain, France and U.S.S.R.

A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY of the popular interest in bloodshed and violence would start with research into individual and mass psychology and end with metaphysics. The love of the earthy and the sensational is restricted to no particular country and to no particular class or time of life. In its crudest form it manifests itself in the crime-reports of the cheap press; but it reappears, otherwise garbed, in a myriad different fields. Children play at piracy; grown men read detective-thrillers; the devil-tales of folk-lore reflect a similar spirit in a more basic way; and the greatest literature, quite apart from the specifically macabre, from the Poes and Le Fanus, is full of it. The heroic warfare of the Iliad, the overshadowing power of the Satanic hosts in *Paradise Lost*, the gore and slaughter of *Hamlet* and the *Oedipus Tyrannus* (in the one on-stage, in the other off), all touch on the same theme. Traditional history adds its own authority. It not only tells of outrageous tyrannies and fields of blood, but goes further, colouring the account with a suitable moral, with airy talk of Realist Politics and Balances of Power. There is more vice and crime in Gibbon alone than a hundred ingenious romancers could fabricate.

GERMANY: FRITZ LANG TO UCICKY

Given such antecedents, it would be remarkable if the cinema, with its unique attributes of swift visual movement and suggestive sound, and seeking a common element of

appeal for a wide public, had not made full use of the subject of crime. Of the countries whose work we chiefly know here, America and Germany stand out in this domain. It is to the old UFA company, first of all, that we are indebted for the Fritz Lang thriller, perhaps the crime-film *par excellence*, in which the brutal and the sordid are fantastically transmuted—and whose rich subterranean excitements have incidentally more than a slight affinity with the gleeful menace of some of Disney's cartoons. Fritz Lang is now in exile, though his tradition lingers on in part in such films as Ucicky's *Savoy-Hotel 217*; but in any case one already felt, in *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*, that he was drawing near the end of a road. Both of his American films to date have varied in conception from his earlier ones.

In Germany, too, Otzep made his version of *The Brothers Karamazov*, involving the attempt (always exceptionally precarious on the screen) to treat his topic from the more psychological aspect. However, in the films which Nazi Germany sends us at the present day, the crime-element tends no longer to be isolated for special handling, from whatever point of view, but rather to creep in as an accompaniment to every sort of theme. Historical films, for example, of the type of *Das Mädchen Johanna* or *The Old King and the Young King*, have their full share of the threatening and the murderous, both in atmosphere and incident; while the latest Emil Jannings film, *Der Herrscher*,

which strictly speaking has no distinctive crime-element in it at all, is heavily tinged with that morbidity and violence of mood which we should associate more readily with a crime-subject. Indirectly, this emphasises one important conclusion: that the determinative factor of a crime-film is its peculiar atmospheric content, whether profound or superficial, from the sublimated melodrama of a Fritz Lang even down to the shrieks-and-shudders or the outright sadism of an inferior plane of production. There is a possible exception—the film with an apparently sociological purpose—but whether this exception is real is often doubtful.

GANGSTERS AND SOCIAL PROPAGANDA

The United States naturally provide us with the major part of our material. There is a large nondescript mass of films—elementary detective-tales, horror-films, and so on—which hardly needs to be considered, since it is so essentially commonplace and unimaginative. Out of this mass, however, there arise more elevated styles, notably that originated by *The Thin Man*, where the thriller or detective-tale ingredients become in the main a background for witty characterisation; and one should not omit to mention that solitary essay in mannered sophistication, *Crime Without Passion*. But there are finally two representative classes of American film, produced on an extensive scale, which are unquestionably individual and significant. These are the gangster-film and a special brand of entertainment-cum-social-propaganda film which seems in great measure to have developed out of the other. The two categories are in any event not sharply separate; and one might even put forward the theory for debate, that social propaganda is never likely to have been the dominant intention behind the making of one of these films.

The gangster-cycles owe their strength and longevity to the fact that they are decisively American. Here are no international master-crooks and mysterious world-wide organisations, but thugs and racketeers shaped according to a recognisable likeness: a manifestation of the shrewd American instinct for topicality, which tries hard to give a core of concreteness to everything—at a pinch, to the most fluffy and romantic of trifles. This characteristic can often be deceptive; for in recognising the concrete core one is apt to assume the truth of the rest without enquiry. But its value in creating an impression needs no emphasis. It was a fear that the impression might in fact be too strong and lead to a glorification of gangsterism that caused the readjustment which brought forth the *G-Men* cycle—the same again, but with a slightly shifted social bias.

Moralising about social conditions has itself considerable topical value, so that the progression from implicit to explicit propaganda is after all a natural one. From *G-Men* or *Public Hero No. 1* there is no long step to the campaigning against child-hooliganism of *The Devil Takes the Count*, or to the assault on mob-gangsterism of *Fury*, *Black Legion* and (despite its historical background) *Maid of Salem*.

These tendencies may be heartily approved—up to a point. It is always worth remembering that the propagandist motive in such films is one among other motives, that films are shown indiscriminately before widely varying audiences, and that, finally, propaganda is a knife with cutting-edges in the most unlikely places.

HITCHCOCK AND ATMOSPHERE

English crime-films depend too largely on borrowings, both of form and content. Flat adaptations from Edgar Wallace and Conan Doyle, or from totally unsuitable stage-

successes, such as *Ten-Minute Alibi*, mark the norm; or again we may find a machine-made comedy-melodrama, a spy-story, a piece of straightforward unpleasantness as in *King of the Damned*—none of them ultimately able to call forth great enthusiasm. Occasionally a bright skit like the Jack Hulbert film *Bulldog Jack* appears on the leaden horizon, but its isolation is immense. The fact is that there is only one maker of crime-films in this country who deserves the name. Anyone may guess who he is—Alfred Hitchcock.

Hitchcock is our native Fritz Lang, and in many ways a true disciple of the master. Like him, he displays an intuitive appreciation of the significance—almost mystical at times in its bizarre excitements—which we can be made to attach to the shadowy underworld of criminality, violence, and monstrous disaster. Like him, too, he is a superb craftsman, with an eye not merely for the unusual but for the emotionally effective. His technique is that of contrast, balancing the normal against the abnormal, slowness against speed, sound against silence, humour against terror, in such a way that our perceptions are heightened whether or not we understand his technical means.

But he reflects at least equally the potential dangers of the general method, dangers to which Lang himself in the past has by no means avoided falling a victim. Often the sum-total of a Hitchcock film is a sense of disappointment, based in the realisation that the film's intellectual substance is too slight to hold it together. The purveyor of atmosphere on the screen must always be something more than a purveyor of atmosphere; he must lead us by logical steps to a well-defined conclusion, or his work will be dispersed at the end in a cloud of smoke, and his creatures scatter and vanish like the phantoms of a mirage.

FRENCH ALLSORTS

The French would not seem to have left any marked individual imprint on the crime-film: for the most part, in this sphere, they have been content to apply efficiently the principles of others. The surrealists have had their say, but conscious surrealism is usually something of a contradiction in terms, and that may explain why up till now, at any rate, its influence in the context has not been earth-shaking. Conceivably also the breezy rascalities of *Ces Messieurs de la Santé*, and of Guitry's *Roman d'un Tricheur*, might be included in a comprehensive list; but one hesitates to think of their heroes' activities as crime in so many words, and of course Sacha Guitry is just representative of Sacha Guitry, not a school or a method. Otherwise, we have the "psychological" approach of *Crime et Châtiment*, in this case relying for the most part on dialogue; and then there are once again the spy-story, the film of sympathetic banditry, and the recurring thriller-cum-farce mixture of a *Mister Flow*.

All these last types are in fact recurring: they have no bounds of nationality, and their formulas are much the same the world over, used now to worse, now to better purpose. If the worse purpose is by far the more frequent, that is in the nature of things. Spy-conflicts are among the most universal, the most perennial of themes. The title of one of Lang's greatest successes, *The Spy*, echoes their popularity. Of this style at large, the 2nd *Bureau* series, founded unashamedly on the peace-time opposition of French and German secret services, offers a relatively skilful example, with the romantic merits and compensating romantic defects of the tradition fairly evenly distributed. But one of the most interesting French films recently seen here was Duvivier's *Pépé le Moko*, of the sympathetic banditry class; for its affinities appear traceable directly to

the American gangster-film. Yet so neatly has the latter's formula been adapted to the French scene and the French idiom that had one not known it in its American surroundings one would have declared it to have been born and nurtured in France.

SOVIET SOCIOLOGY

There is one country which, so far as it is possible to tell from a distance, has contributed little or nothing to the ordinary stock of crime-films; and that is the U.S.S.R. Trends at present are said to be altering; but since production under the Revolution is State-controlled, and since the end of Soviet film-making in general has been not economic gain but rather the dissemination of doctrine by persuasive means, the orientation of the popular Russian cinema, until at any rate a comparatively short while ago, has been markedly different in many important respects from that of the popular cinema further West. Originality there has been in plenty, but on its highest plane it has been expended on more earnest (whether or not more desirable) purposes than the provision of entertaining ingenuities.

Crime of a kind certainly finds a place in important Soviet films; but not a place of honour. Further, it usually consists of violence on so generous a scale that the term "crime," with its narrower connotations, ceases to be applicable. The fighting, the shooting, the bitter and ruthless destruction of revolutions and counter-revolutions, of oppressors and oppressed battling in a war without quarter, these hardly suggest the film of crime as we normally think of it; and the sweeping political and propagandist implications of the films in which such things occur prevent us from classifying them simply according to their incidental details.

Nevertheless, the Russians have made at least one specific crime-film of which we know at first hand in this country. It goes without saying that its motives are sociological. Nikolai Ekk's *Road to Life* deals with the redemption of youthful criminals, through organised education in citizenship, to the service of the State. Thus the subject-matter of crime is introduced here for the most practical and extracine-matic ends. There is no fundamental kinship with the palate-ticklings of the commoner type of crime-film elsewhere, nor even with the atmospheric power of the early Lang and his followers: there is, however, an overlap

with the American film of social propaganda already mentioned.

THE END OF THE CRIME FILM

This is an overlap which is observable at certain points only. The Russian method involves a statement of the problem, a description, encouragingly set out, of what is being done to solve it, and an exhortation to further action in the same direction. The American method on the other hand tends, little by little, to diverge into an unrelieved indictment of an entire system of life. Fritz Lang's powerfully-handled *Fury*, greeted with such enthusiasm, appears to be an item in a developing campaign on these lines. That campaign, if restrained and properly directed, may do good; but if it goes too far it will merely inure us to what it attacks, and become an anti-social force on its own account.

They Won't Forget is an American film which at the time of writing has not yet been publicly exhibited in England. In this the tendencies above noted have been carried to their extremest point. The villain of the piece is the villain of *Fury*—the mob, stirred up to hysteria and hatred, and lusting for blood; but here no Providence defeats its endeavours. At the conclusion Justice has been signally overcome, the victim has been lynched, the panders and feeders of the mob have been rewarded, and the feeble complainings of reason have been silenced. A horrible aura of truth hangs about these degradations and barbarities. There is nothing—no encouragement to better, no hope of improvement, no consoling thought—to soften their impact on our minds.

Perhaps this is the logical end of all crime-films; but if so, it is a grisly one. Its moral effect is likely to be bad, not because it may give the sensitive nightmares—they will probably recover from them—but because it will brutalise the pachyderm and please the sensation-hunter. And finally, though it rings so true, is it truth? Every complete work of art represents the cosmos; and a film which, even within its private confines, so utterly denies the power of Right to hold its own, runs a risk of denying by implication the validity of all ethical values. This it is that even the tritest, most unconvincing of happy endings in practice recognises, with whatever distortions and through whatever mists of obscurity.





Homeless, refugee peasants beset a train, in *Knight Without Armour*; made by London Films at Denham United Artists

ENTERTAINMENT PLUS

Films of the Quarter Reviewed by ALAN PAGE

MR. MARTIN QUIGLEY, an American cinema trade publisher, says: "It is the industry's judgment and mine that the entertainment film belongs in the province of entertainment and nowhere else." Supposing that statement to be true, at what point does an entertainment film cease to be mere entertainment and belong in another province? Presumably when the characters have to face the kind of, even the same, problems that cinema audiences are themselves having to face, and when the story is made to point a moral, to espouse a cause or simply to present cinema audiences with a picture of life in an industry, a country or a section of society, at any given time.

There are very few "entertainment" films nowadays that have not extended their province to include one or more of these things. Therein lies the evidence that the cinema is growing up, not as quickly as some might wish perhaps, but faster certainly than its audiences. *Maytime* will probably be bigger box-office than *The Good Earth* because of this discrepancy in growth, but the time cannot be far distant when the drug-film like *Maytime*, pleasant and harmless though it may be, will have to yield to the more mentally nourishing movie of *The Good Earth* class. In other words, Mr. Quigley's entertainment film is fast becoming the entertainment plus film.

Accepting the fact that a love story is the core of an entertainment film, *Victoria the Great* was a very nice,

refined piece of entertainment. Wilcox has set a high standard of accuracy and restraint for the promised cycle of films based on the life of the Queen. The decorous atmosphere of the young Queen's romance is amusingly established, and Anna Neagle never allows her Victoria to waver from her determination to be Good. Starting with the Accession we are shown Victoria's courtship and married life with the Prince Consort from the "human"—or royal boy-meets-girl—angle. There is also a discreet peppering of national movements and history outside the Palace, with their repercussions on those within the Palace. Thus we are given a sketchy outline of the reign up to the death of Albert, and when Albert dies the film dies too, with the final moments of Anton Walbrook's brilliant performance. The Queen becomes the Widow of Windsor and, persuaded at last to come out of retirement, she is shown, in Technicolor, receiving the homage of her Empire in the gardens of Buckingham Palace and the plaudits of the people at the Diamond Jubilee, with a final, atrocious shot of the young Queen bowing to the old Queen-Empress. How to end the film after the Prince Consort's death is admittedly a difficult problem, but only because such great emphasis has been laid on the love story. But still, with so vast an amount of ground to cover, Wilcox has certainly made a praiseworthy British film.

Another notable British film was *Farewell Again*. This

was an omnibus story of life on board a homeward bound troopship. All the characters had very good reasons for wanting, or for not wanting, to get home, and the drama arose when it was announced that the ship would have only six hours in Southampton before it had to turn round and sail for the Far East. The characters were all well drawn and well acted, and the situations in which they found themselves were interesting and amusing. But this was not why the film was so notable. The notable thing was the magnificent propaganda for the British Army put across with an entire absence of hokum and the minimum of sentiment—by a German producer, Erich Pommer, and an American director, Tim Whelan. The scenes of military life in the troopship were instructive and entertaining and the spirit of the men was effectively captured.

It is almost incredible that the same director should have made *Action for Slander*, a preposterous story of card cheating at an aristocratic English house-party. The only good thing about the film was Morton Selten's outrageous caricature of the judge in a final court sequence that afforded a welcome opportunity for legitimate laughter.

Three more British films shown during the last quarter were *Knight Without Armour*, *King Solomon's Mines* and *The Edge of the World*. The first was the much publicised Dietrich film. It was long and slow, it had Dietrich in the bath, in the woodland stream and in bed. It had Dietrich in a pre-War Ascot creation, a wedding dress, a peasant shawl and a (White) officer's uniform. It also had lots and lots of languishing close-ups of the Dietrich's wondrous, wondering eyes. It had Donat as a Red, a White, and a Red, White and Blue official in Russia; it had Hay Petrie acting brilliantly as a mad stationmaster,

and John Clements acting sincerely as a young Red Commissar who forgot all about the rights of the workers when he looked into the Dietrich eyes; it had any number of well-produced and scrupulously impartial revolutionary war scenes. But it was not a good film.

King Solomon's Mines was a rehash of the old Rider Haggard melodrama, technically good, reasonably exciting and indifferently acted. Surely cinemagoers are sufficiently aware of the fact that Paul Robeson has a fine voice to allow it to be taken for granted occasionally. *The Edge of the World* was pictorially a grand picture. The island scenery of Foula may have been fool-proof photographic material, but all the same there is hardly a shot that does not mean something, apart from being merely beautiful. Most of the film is documentary, but a not very plausible story—to give it entertainment, I suppose—has been grafted on, necessitating the use of professional actors. The film would have been amply entertaining without the story.

From Hollywood came a diversity of good things last quarter. First there was another Technicolor film, *A Star is Born*, giving a curiously revealing picture of the American movie industry. Frequently the story of the small-town girl's rise to film fame in face of heavy odds was lifted out of the hokum level to give glimpses of the real problems of the stars. For this we have to thank the director, the writer of the dialogue and the two stars, Janet Gaynor and Fredric March. This is indeed a triumph for Gaynor, who emerges with a mature certainty of touch and a new wide-range technique. The colour which is good and restrained, is emphasised by one cunning shot of a preview of a black and white film.

Before we come to the comedies mention must be made

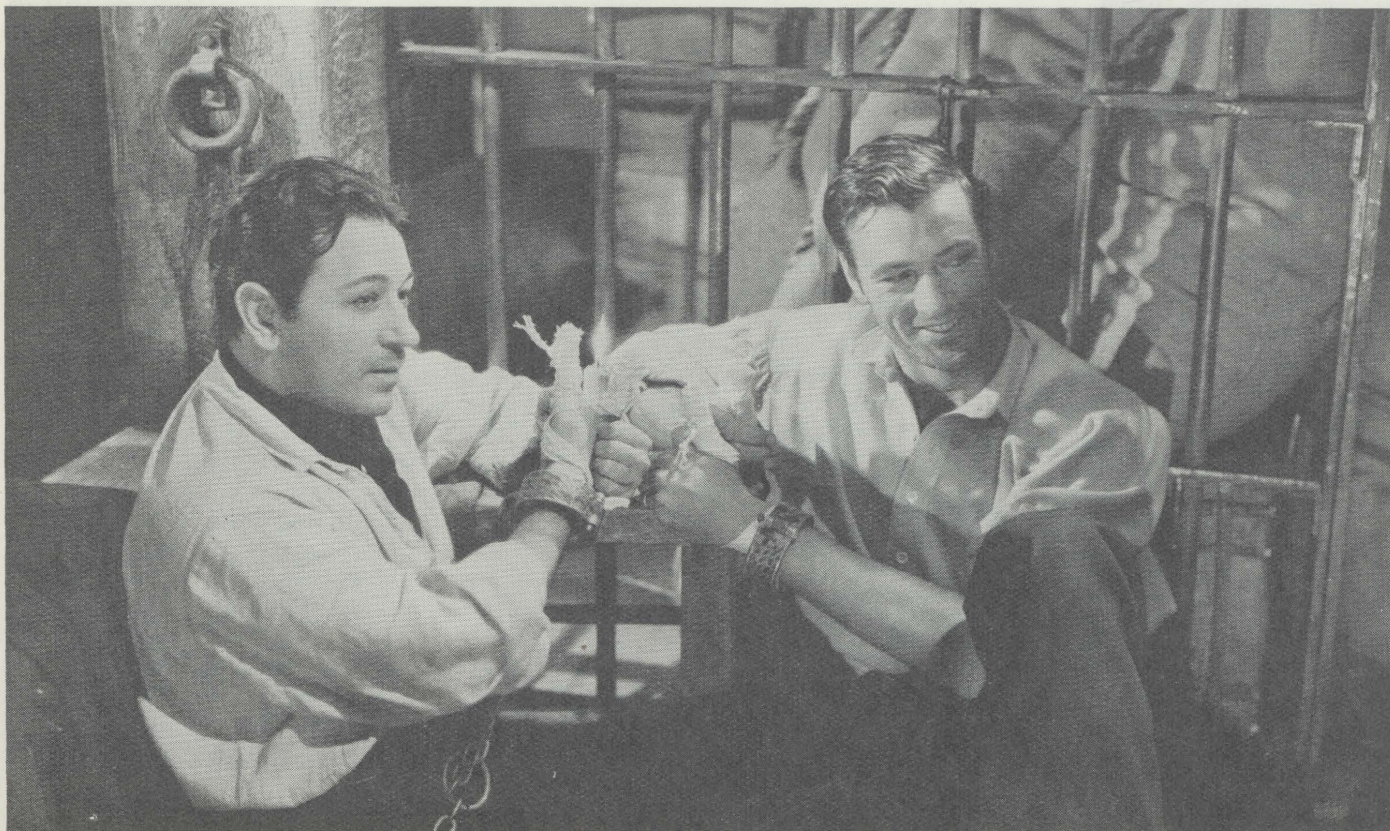


The White Countess (Marlene Dietrich) faces the Reds, in *Knight Without Armour*; directed by Jacques Feyder



(Above) Edward Arnold, Ray Milland and Jean Arthur in *Easy Living*, directed by Mitchell Leisen
Paramount

(Below) George Raft and Gary Cooper in *Souls at Sea*, directed by Henry Hathaway
Paramount



of *Souls at Sea*, the Gary Cooper-George Raft tale of slave-traders in the 1840's. Based on a true story the material was exciting enough without all the tinkering it has received. For some reason the flash-back method of telling the tale was used, and a cowardly concession was made to the fetish that every film has got to have a heroine and a love story. But the photography was good and the ship-sinking sequence was excellent. Gary Cooper is getting better and better. His performance made this film.

The new Marx Brothers film, *A Day at the Races*, was a further example of the M.G.M. grooming process. The comedians could now enter any drawing-room—providing it belonged to someone one didn't like—without verbally, if not physically, disastrous results. Their adventures have become almost a series of turns, appliquéd on to a routine plot of youthful lovers embroidered with song and dance. But the important thing is that the Brothers get their laughs, louder and longer, if anything, than before. *A Day at the Races* was a very well-made comedy with one beautifully composed shot of a room crowded with negroes performing various domestic tasks.

Two other extravaganzas with music were *High, Wide and Handsome* and *Wake Up and Live*. The first had a background of the Pennsylvania oilfields when oil was first discovered and the farmers were at war with the railway company. This was melodrama in the grand manner, decked out with high-class photography and neatly interwoven with music. *Wake Up and Live* was a one hundred per cent wisecracking, double-crossing, improbable fable of the rivalry between a newspaper columnist and a dance band leader for the services of a young man who accidentally made a hit as a phantom crooner. This had the novelty of presenting Walter Winchell and Ben Bernie as themselves, an experiment that succeeded through the snappiness

of the dialogue and the amusing absurdities of the plot. The tunes were good and Patsy Kelly had her share of the laughs.

Easy Living was a gay piece of nonsense spun round the consequences of a Wall Street millionaire throwing his wife's sable coat out of the window on to the head of a bewildered girl riding on a Fifth Avenue bus. Everyone shouted at and misunderstood everyone else with terrific gusto and Mitchell Leisen has kept the thing moving so fast that even if one wanted to, one could not stop to consider whether it was all quite as funny as it seemed. Anyway, with Jean Arthur giving a really gorgeous performance, it didn't matter. The same thing applied to *Woman Chases Man*, a passably funny frolic about an eccentric young millionaire, and an even more eccentric father and a starving woman architect, made immensely funnier by the acting of Miriam Hopkins. When Miss Hopkins sets out to get something, whether it is money or the affections of a young man, there is absolutely nothing that will stop her. She can talk faster and think faster and act faster than anyone else, and all with such such an air of dewy-eyed innocence. This was an entertainment film, pure and simple, the plus qualities being supplied by Miriam Hopkins.

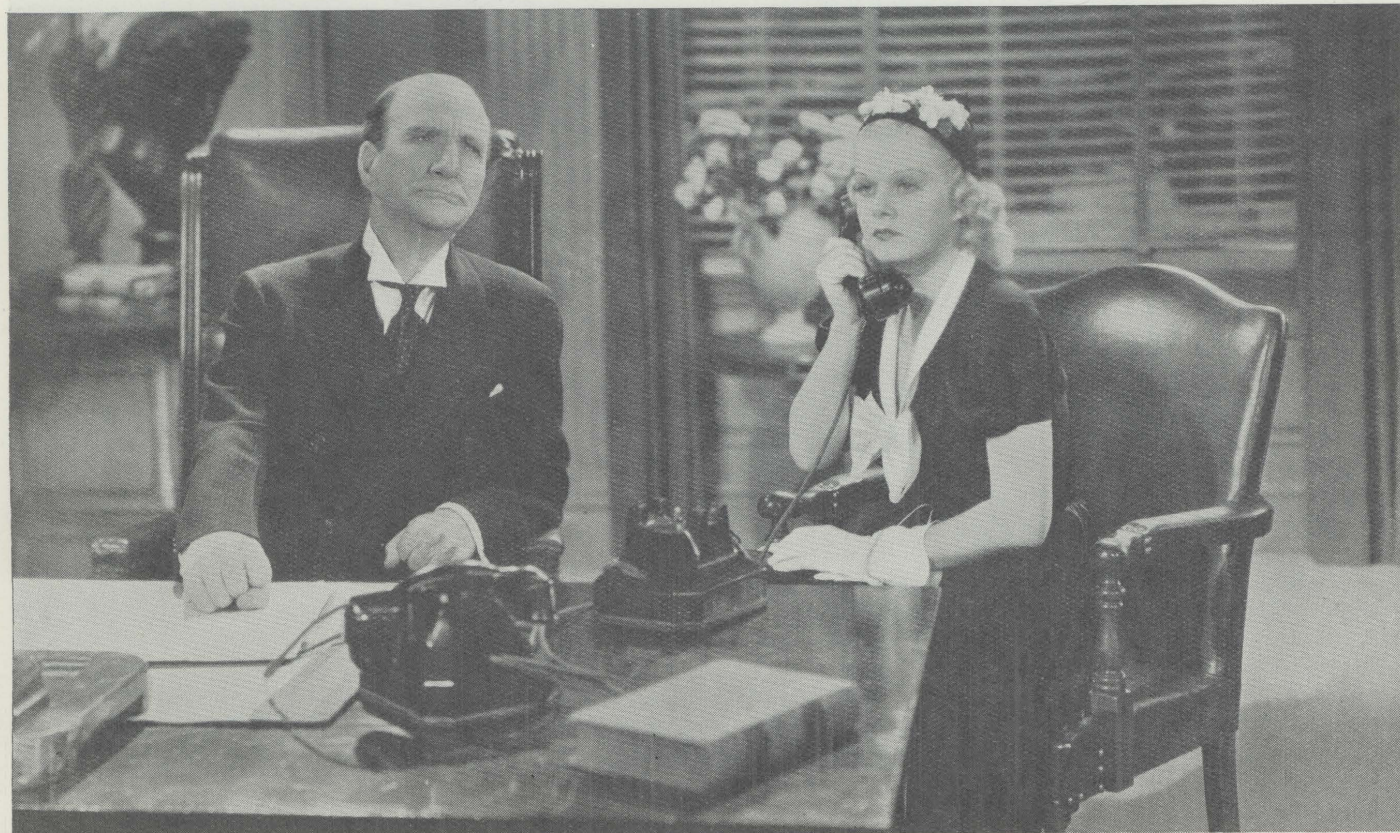
Another entertainment film unconcerned with any promptings of social conscience was *Café Metropole*, a rather silly story of a young man who lost more than he possessed to a restaurant proprietor and then had to pay off his debt by masquerading as a Russian prince for the benefit of a rich American client. The notable thing about the film was the suave performance of Adolphe Menjou as the plausible rascal who ran the Café. There was also a very neat final fade-out.

A film that would not normally have merited much notice



(Above) Miriam Hopkins and Joel McCrea in *Woman Chases Man*, directed by John Blystone
United Artists

(Below) Jean Harlow in *Saratoga*, her last film, directed by Jack Conway
M.G.M.



was *Saratoga*, but it so happened that it contained Jean Harlow's farewell appearance. It was a pity that such a clever and likeable actress could not have had a more suitable exit. The last part of the film was completed after her death and it is a tribute to her personality that without her the film goes quite limp.

Trick photography is, when all's said and done, a poor way of getting laughs for a full-length film. *Topper* was a comedy that relied almost entirely for its laughs on that method. The joke wore thin pretty soon, but there were some good moments, in particular the spectacle of a drunk man being dragged through a hotel lobby by two invisible supporters. Roland Young was the man *on whom* the miracles were worked this time and he took it all very charmingly. A surprising piece of casting was Constance Bennett as one of the disappearing experts. She picked her way through her part as though she was on a slumming jaunt.

Broadway Melody of 1938 belonged in the province of entertainment and nowhere else, very definitely. In fact so determined was it to belong in this province that it borrowed most of the situations and not a few of the production ideas that had helped to make other wholly entertainment films successful. There was even a *réchauffé* of some of the tunes from earlier *Broadway Melodies*. Buddy Ebsen, as usual, stole the picture, not a very difficult feat, and Eleanor Powell proved conclusively that she is a far better dancer than actress.

A.P.

GEORGE PAL's latest puppet film, *Philip's Big Broadcast*, is in Technicolor this time, and it shows marked developments on his earlier films made for Philips and for Horlicks. The sets are more spacious, and the camera work and cutting more imaginative. His puppets' pirouettes will be the envy of any dancer, and his chorus work and "big spectacles" will drive Busby Berkeley into retirement. But while he has developed the manipulation of his puppets Pal has not forgotten the satire and parody which he can effect through their limitations; his crooners and ballroom dancers are only too real—if you see them the way Pal does.

The quarter has also brought *Trade Tattoo*, a new film made for the G.P.O. Film Unit by Len Lye, who is now also working in Technicolor. This time he has applied artificial colour to documentary material originally photographed in black and white, and cut the film to swing music. The result is exciting to hear and to watch.

Lotte Reiniger's new and first English silhouette film, *The King's Breakfast*, which was described and illustrated in the last issue of SIGHT AND SOUND, has now been press shown. A. A. Milne's sleepy Alderney, who tried to change the habits of a King, comes to life most endearingly.

It is not to be expected that every Disney cartoon will maintain the high level Disney has set himself in his best work. *The Old Mill* is as fresh and as satisfying in conception as the first of the Symphonies and as carefully executed. Most Disney's are worth seeing; this is worth going out of the way to see.

W.F.



Adolphe Menjou, Lionel Stander, Fredric March and Janet Gaynor in *A Star is Born*, directed by William Wellman
United Artists

SACHA GUITRY AND THE REST

ARTHUR VESSELO reviews the Continental Films of the Quarter, which has brought to London Cinemas two highly individual films made by Sacha Guitry and films from France, Poland, Germany and Vienna

JULY AND AUGUST have had their usual diminishing effects both upon the quantity and the quality of the newly-imported Continental films. Even so, France has remained our chief contributor; and with the opening of the autumn season the numerical relationship of French to other films through the quarter, if we include one previously shown at the Film Society, has risen to a proportion of four out of seven.

Of the three others one comes from Poland; but it is in a different category, even on the point of language, from the last Polish film seen in this country, *The Day of the Great Adventure*. *Yiddle with his Fiddle* is a Jewish rather than a Polish film. All the characters are Jewish, and the dialogue is in that curious *lingua franca* of the Jews of Eastern Europe, Yiddish. Nevertheless, the settings are strictly Polish; and the conditions of life portrayed, if in romantic form and avoiding the unhappier side, are specifically those of Polish Jewry.

What individuality the film has is not to be sought in plot or technique. The ingredients of sentimental comedy are very much alike wherever one encounters them. Strolling players; girls dressed up as boys, producing foreseen complications; beautiful young women betrothed to rich, vulgar men and loving poor ones; fortunate twists of events leading at last to love and virtue triumphant: these are the commonplaces of a perpetual unvarying tradition, and the spasmodic interspersions of song and music belong in the same closed circle. The linking-up of incidents is not less episodic than one might expect; and the pleasant exterior photography, in field and countryside, is itself no novelty in this type of environment.

Yet the film has something of its own, despite its hackneyed elements, if merely because Yiddish films are so rare. It gives us, in its essential simplicity of heart, the authentic Poland of the émigré's recollections, with the harshnesses softened by time and distance, the greys turned rosy-coloured. The scenes, the figures, are those no doubt of the exile's misty dreams; and the ragged cheerfulness of the protagonists, together with the final easy working-out of their problems, unsubtle but still in a way significant, correspond to an idealisation of something appealing because far-off. To the Jews now still in Poland the idealisation must bear a somewhat different character—a wish, instead of a remembrance.

The second non-French film is from Germany. The director, Geza von Bolvary, has a name we should by this time know well: indeed, it appears yet again in our present catalogue, though with the programme-alteration, suitably to the context, of "von" to "de"—a nice conceit. Bolvary has shown himself on previous occasions a very efficient worker, but in *A Castle in Flanders* the inadequacy of his material limits his scope. For half its course the film is mainly concerned with the provision of an imposing array

of supernatural red herrings. To a mysterious and lonely castle an English officer, reported killed in the War, returns, in ghostly manner, as one who haunts the scene of his most passionate emotions. Appropriate expedients are further employed to induce in us an other-worldly frame of mind. But as soon as the road has been circumstantially prepared, the film begins, step by step, to explain everything away again, until the tale has been reduced to a level of wholehog melodramatic banality, complete with self-sacrificing (and no longer ghostly) hero, honourably shouldering the blame for a woman's misdeed but happily achieving his desires in the end. With the final withdrawal of the supernatural suggestion, all pretence of logic—never too much—is scattered to the winds.

The director does what he can where he can. He gives us an effective glimpse of distant battlefields at night, lit by bursting shells and resounding with muffled, ferocious echoes; or he creates feelingly an atmospheric downpour of rain in a solitary place, also at night. He smooths Marta Eggerth and her singing quite neatly into the action, and, when she takes part in a revue-scene, displays ready understanding of the artificial-spectacular, for whatever that may be worth. But his English characters are too stiff to be successful; and he is overwhelmed utterly by the film's mass of shallow self-contradictions.

If Herr von Bolvary is not seen to best advantage in *A Castle in Flanders*, neither, indubitably, is M. de Bolvary in *Stradivarius*. The recipe in this instance is that of a loving couple—here a Hungarian officer and an Italian music-student in Budapest—divided by the Great War but eventually joined, by coincidence, more concretely by an altogether too noble-hearted second-string lover, and, in short, by film-luck in general. The link with *Stradivarius* is entirely factitious, since the introduction of a valuable violin with an apocryphal curse put on it by its maker was necessary neither to give an opportunity for the fiddling of romantic Hungarian melodies nor to explain the sufferings caused by the War. As for the *Stradivarius* insertions themselves, they take the form of brief, unrevealing, and feebly-acted flash-backs.

This is as evident an example as one may get of the film worked out strictly according to a skeleton-formula. Moreover, the skeleton's bones wear at times only the meagrest covering of flesh, so that they are apt to become visible to the eye almost in their pristine nakedness. One ought presumably to take these factors into account in estimating the value to the plot of *Stradivarius* and his curse; for the latter, by diverting attention slightly from the main issue, do succeed in adding a certain delusory beat of life to the automaton, and prevent it from looking entirely like an animated corpse.

Those cinema-goers who persist in regarding the Continent as a unified producing-entity, thus easily

distinguishable from countries producing in the English language, will find gratifying support in the film for their view. Hungarians and Italians alike discourse in French; but the one English character, a nurse, is allowed to break, somewhat disturbingly, into her own tongue.

Danielle Darrieux, who achieved for herself the dignity of a Hollywood contract after her performance in *Mayerling*, bids France farewell in Léo Joannon's *Mad Girl*. Her "au revoir" has almost the ring of an "I'll be seein' you." On the face of it, there is an obvious resemblance between the terms of the present film and those of the particular brand of wild comedy to which in Hollywood La Cava, Van Dyke, and others have given such a vogue during the last two or three years. Yet, although the American influence is plain, the problem of determining how deep it actually goes here is perhaps less straightforward, without at least an embracing knowledge of previous French conditions and French films of every sort. Crazification is in the air, not only in Hollywood; and the degree of derivativeness is otherwise made less certain by the adjustment of the style, as in *Pépé le Moko*, befittingly to the native manner. The elementary mistake of mere incorporation has been avoided—perhaps through shrewdness, perhaps in large part because the French tend automatically to Gallicise anything, in whatever sphere, which they put to their own use.

The heroine of the film is dismissed from her office after a tooth-and-nail with a fellow-typist, and in despondency (since She Wanted to Marry Her Boss) throws herself into the Seine, whence she is rescued against her will by a man-about-town going home to a party. He is ill-advised enough to take her with him, and she, now in a high state of tempestuous unrestraint, drinks up his liquor, scatters his guests (his mistress among them) in the utterest confusion, floods his bedrooms, and ends up finally round his neck. Many of these farcical antics, especially in later passages, are quick and funny; some, however, are weakened by obtrusive machinery. Both Danielle Darrieux and Albert Préjean show themselves practised in comedy; but the most persuasive effort comes from Lucien Baroux, as one of those harassed but through-fire-and-water obedient gentlemen's gentlemen of whom the sophisticated screen is so profuse.

AUTUMN BRINGS US our first Viennese film for some little while, Georg Jacoby's *Tales from the Vienna Woods*. With its impoverished young sprigs of a decrepit nobility, its pretty heroines winsomely pretending not to be themselves at all, its slapstick funny men, and its songs, Strauss waltzes (relationship to the main theme—despite the title—none, or practically none), and communal merry-makings in general, it has, in the compendious journalistic phrase, "no surprises"—except the one, outstanding surprise, of relative spontaneity. To say of a mixture of this kind that it is better than other mixtures of the same kind would seem to be rather like saying of identical twins that one is beautiful and the other plain. Yet even *Sylvia und ihr Chauffeur* had a moment or two near the close when it was pervaded by an authentic air of light-heartedness; and this welcome vitality, appearing, however, not at far-placed intervals but almost all the way through, is what gives to the present film its chief distinctiveness. The cutting is still very choppy, and the ending still absurd; but the jollifications are thoroughly spirited, the funny men really

funny (the inimitable Leo Slezak is at his hearty, hail-fellow best), and in the prevailing mood, even the more obvious lapses of the romantic interest may be overlooked.

As for the familiarity of the theme, there are no secrets made about it. Girl and Boy are sitting together, Girl expounding to Boy the plot of a story which she proposes to write. "But," says Boy, "haven't I heard that story before?" "Oh, yes," says Girl, "but the public just loves hearing it all over again." If the words are not exact, nevertheless the reference to the film's own composition is clear enough. In this environment a few carefree strokes suffice to make a portrait. A wagon-load of "O.K.'s" and a peculiar accent (yet not nearly so peculiar as that of most wealthy Transatlantic travellers) produce a millionaire American; a monocle and the Russian expressions for "Good-bye" and "Good God" give us a Prince in exile. But for once, these simplifications hardly matter.

With *Le Roman d'un Tricheur* (reviewed in SIGHT AND SOUND, No. 20), at the Academy, and *Les Perles de la Couronne* at the Curzon, mid-October sees two of M. Sacha Guitry's famous one-man shows on in London together. The new film, which had a gala première on May 12th in Paris, is a bogus history of seven pearls, four of which adorn the Crown of England and three of which were lost. M. Guitry has had the idea of using the topicalities of Coronation year to add ingenious lustre to his private diadem.

Much-publicised was his scheme for demolishing national barriers by the use of three interlocking languages—English, French, Italian. Three narrators, each an active part of the story, tell the tale, which moves between the three countries. But the success of this experiment may be gauged by the considerable alterations which have been found necessary for English showing. Several passages have simply been deleted (among them, significantly, are some of the English ones), and the excisions, it must be confessed, are no loss; other episodes have been shuffled about, English dialogue has been dubbed in places, and at least one scene appears to have been remade. With all this, the usual superimposed sub-titles are there too. But—unkindest cut!—the chief pearl of the author-director-star's own Crown, his witty running-commentary, has been replaced by an English one. *Ichabod!* the commentary is departed. So that the film is only a half-man show after all.

The story chuckles stragglingly across centuries, from Henry VIII, Clement VII, and Francis I (or should one not rather say, Sacha I?) to the present day. Clearly, M. Guitry holds to the maxim that the film must move. He himself repeats his well-known quick-change act with his well-known *savoir faire*: indeed, his disguise as Napoleon III is for an instant almost deceptive. His acting, let it be said at once, is—it can never fail to be—a delight; and his incidental directorial touches are, here and there, most amusing. But this guffaw-game of "guess who" can occasionally go a trifle too far. One sometimes feels that not only is M. Guitry pretending to be everybody else, but he is trying to make everybody else act as though pretending to be M. Guitry. In screen-technique, again, he reminds us just a little too forcibly of the clever amateur. He should beware lest he suffer eventually the fate of the Disney one-man jazz-band in *Mickey's Amateurs*; who, peering out of the complicated wreckage of his machinery after it has gone up in sudden smoke all round him, is constrained to declare, in gruff but genial astonishment, "It's bursted."

THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

Documentary Films of the Quarter Reviewed by THOMAS BAIRD and WILLIAM FARR

CHILDREN AT SCHOOL (Great Britain)

THE SMOKE MENACE (Great Britain)

Production: Realist Film Unit; John Grierson (Film Centre). *Direction:* Basil Wright; John Taylor.

KENSAL HOUSE (Great Britain)

Direction: Frank Sainsbury.

Distribution: 35 and 16 mm. British Commercial Gas Association, or Gas Light and Coke Company.

More fundamental even than the psychology of the child, the fitness of the curriculum, and the wage rates of teachers are some of the practical aspects of the life of our schools. One of these primary conditions of education—the actual physical conditions of the school—is the subject of *Children at School*. The film is a trenchant exposure of the conditions under which many children are educated.

The opening sequences depict the new experiments in education which are being conducted in the progressive schools. The Nursery School idea is explained, aspects of the Dalton plan are shown, we see some Montessori theories in practice, we see health and nutrition services in operation, we see large classrooms for small classes where southern exposures flood the schoolroom with light and health. In the nursery schools children up to the age of five or six learn to play and acquire the first disciplines. There are playing fields and playgrounds where planned recreation builds straight and strong bodies.

It is to be expected that this is the normal heritage of every child in this democracy of ours. But no: the film goes on to reveal that such school life belongs only to a few of the children of England. Most of them are brought up in schools with few of these benefits, and an alarming number are educated in condemned buildings.

It is so easy for the theorist to map out a plan by which a child at school leads a happy, full, and even beautiful life. It is so easy to teach these theories in training colleges. The tragedy is that more than half of the children of England arrive at a school where, in spite of the good intentions of the teachers, the theories are impossible.

The experts agree that a school class should number no more than thirty. Yet the teacher often has fifty in a room which should hold no more than the expert's recommended number. Most educators, from Plato to Baden-Powell, agree that games are an important item in the education of children: games are not very easy in a room where desks for fifty children fill every corner, and playgrounds of asphalt are unkind to youthful rough and tumble.

All these points are made by the film. Keen and dispassionate observation by Basil Wright gives the film a quiet strength. The tragedy of inefficient schools is stated mildly; there are no fireworks, but the understatement has a poignance which bites deeper than any shock tactic. This quiet treatment seems a tribute to the patient teacher: this is made explicit in several scenes where heartbroken teachers try ways and means to do their job efficiently, to make a contribution to the better living of youthful citizens in a situation where every material condition is against them: it is even more powerful when the tribute is implicit as, for

example, when "The Golden Road to Samarkand" is recited over visuals of cracked walls and the dirty dinginess of a condemned school: aspiration even in squalor.

The film throws its bouquets by implication, and it also throws its brickbats by the same twist of the wrist. And this is its power. It is an observation of a fact. If it condemns anybody it is democracy. If it had condemned the Board of Education it would probably have been wrong. If it had condemned the Directors of Education it would most certainly have been wrong. If it had condemned the Government it might possibly have been wrong. But as the film takes great care to point out, Britain is a democracy: condemnation of the Government would automatically have been a condemnation of the British people. So by implication it criticises the people of this British democracy. The next step is inference by the people from the film—and this I take to be pretty good politics. Unless, of course, these patient teachers, who have impotently suffered the appalling conditions in school, happen to be part of our democracy: then perhaps the people of Britain have more to answer for than they can with honesty. That Government action in face of public apathy and teachers' patience may be necessary the film does not admit.

Two other films in this year's Gas Industry output are *The Smoke Menace* and *Kensal House*, both sociological documents showing constructive work in the amelioration of living conditions. *The Smoke Menace* shows the evil effect on health by the pollution of the atmosphere by smoke due to unscientific uses of coal; it describes the economic waste involved; it posits an economic and salutary solution; and makes a logical appeal to the public conscience.

Kensal House is an objective record, by Frank Sainsbury, of an experiment in workers' flats. It is a mild form of *Housing Problems* with a convincing clarity and neat unity. The photography is clean and competent, and the contact with the real people is well established. T. B.

WORK PAYS AMERICA; RAIN FOR THE EARTH; T.V.A. AT WORK; THE PLOW THAT BROKE THE PLAINS (U.S.A.)

Production: U.S. Government; Works Progress Administration; Tennessee Valley Authority; Resettlement Administration.

THE SPANISH EARTH (U.S.A.)

Production: Contemporary Historians Inc.

There is an old, rather silly and not very funny story about an international expedition which set out to study the elephant. All exploring done, the various members wrote their accounts. The Englishman wrote *Elephants I've Shot*, the Scotsman wrote *The Ivory Trade*, the Russian *The Elephant: Does it Exist?* the Frenchman *L'Elephant et ses Amours*, and the American *The Elephant: a Survey, or Bigger and Better Elephants for the U.S.*

I was reminded of this old, rather silly and not very funny story when I saw recently a group of American documentary films. I was struck again by the recollection that the early British documentaries did not give us a dose



Children at School

Gas Industry

of information. I take it that *Drifters*, *Upstream* and *O'er Hill and Dale* were the early British documentaries and they, while informative, did not hurl information at our head. They were more persuasive because of that. They gave us the smell of the open air, the braveries of small ships and large seas and they presented with a sense of wonder the everyday rhythms. They were poetic rather than scientific and never statistical. But because probably of the Scots influence it was not the poetry of huntin' and fishin' but that strange new and perfectly natural poetry of trade. British documentary grew out of a carefully calculated philosophical background. As it developed it borrowed more and more from the technique of reporting though it remained shot through with that sense of wonder which had been the earlier poetry.

American documentary has on the other hand grown directly out of reporting . . . by Democrat out of Newsreel. The beginning is always the idea of a survey. Statistic is the foundation; information the aim. We know that Americans are capable of assimilating much more cold information than we are. They can take it, or so the American documentary maker presumes. But even with the Americans' natural capacity for cold information and their contempt for anything but hard facts they will I think require more directorial effort in their documentary films if a steady audience is to be built up.

In all the films noticed here, there was plenty of evidence of the normal slick American editing, wipes, dissolves, trick titles and so on, but there was a lack of intention and perspective behind the mass of facts. Only direction can give this. The commentary in most cases tried to carry all the theme, and the picture was left to illustrate with newsreel shots and cuts from other films. The next step is of course for the picture to carry some of the theme and most of the action. A realisation of this was apparent in *The Plow that Broke the Plains* which is quite the most effective purely documentary film which America has so far made.

It is so because it gets behind merely facts and tries to see events in relation to a theme. It organises perception: it is a narrative rather than a mere report. If it has a fault it is that its producers are rather taken up with their new-found power of poetical comment: the film is full of conceits as the camera lingers on the picturesque when it ought to be smashing on with its narrative of terror and destruction.

Most of these documentaries are pre-*March of Time* or show no signs of its influence. Their reporting in *Work Pays America* is more primitive than that of *The March of Time*. Their emotional elements as in *The Plow that Broke the Plains* are less well directed. *The Spanish Earth*, in which Hemingway, Reis, Ivens and Van Dongen had a hand shows intelligent realisation of the power of documentary. The sound is as advanced as that of *The Plow*, is less precious and is therefore more effective. The photography is less decorative and therefore more real. The theme is equally critical and the conception as important. It fails to convince in spite of its transparent reality because the subject was bafflingly difficult and incapable of better organisation. It is perhaps impossible to have a completely organised production on film of a report of real war. *The Spanish Earth* attempted no less than this.

With England paying more and more attention to the dispassionate reporting power of documentary and less to the poetry, and America moving from mere report towards the treatment of themes, the exchange of documentary films will be of mutual benefit.

T. B.

THE WORLD IN REVOLT (Great Britain)

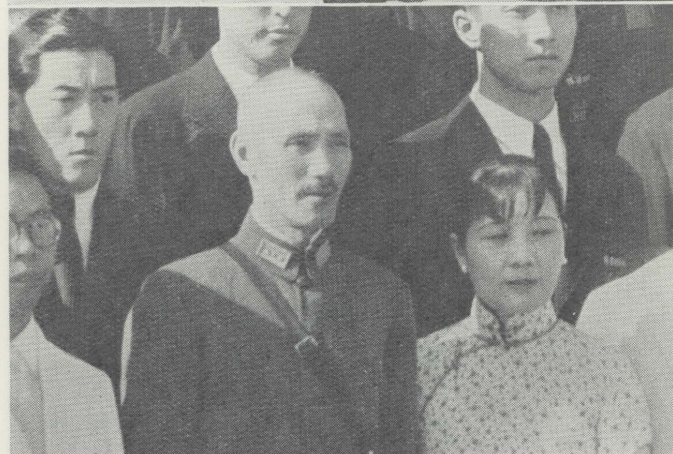
Production: Mentone. Distribution: Associated British.

WAR IN CHINA: MARCH OF TIME, 3rd Year, No. 4 (U.S.A.)

Distribution: Radio Pictures.

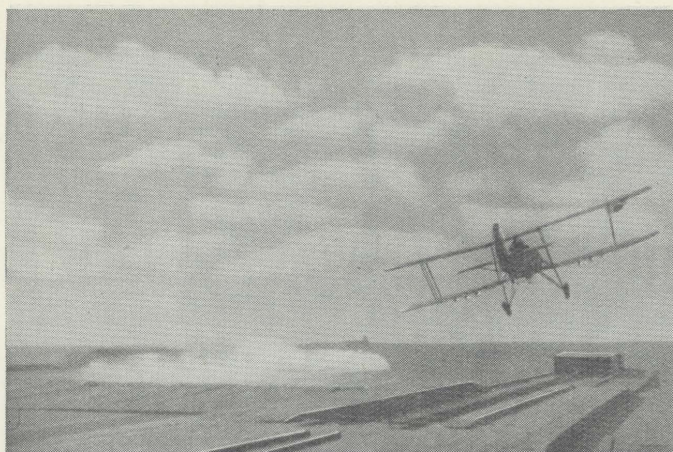
A comparison of the China sequence in *The World in Revolt* with *War in China*, which have been showing concurrently in London, provides the most striking demonstration of the contribution being made by *The March of Time* to screen journalism and popular education, and of the inadequacy, in both spheres, of the ordinary newsreel. War is always news, but its tragedy is not to be revealed in piles of mutilated bodies nor its danger in the strained, impassive faces of Chinese refugees. Human suffering caused by violence is detestable; but in China to-day we are witnessing the destruction of Chiang Kai-Shek's ten years work in fighting famine, pestilence and civil war, in creating the foundations of health and wellbeing for a nation of 400 million people for the first time in modern times. That is the tragedy. And the danger is the danger to the world symbolised by the presence at Shanghai of increased foreign armed forces to protect the commercial privileges conceded by China in 1842. This is the story presented by *The March of Time*, presented with restraint, economy and technical brilliance. It may be over-simplified, but it does at any rate place to-day's events in perspective and give them a degree of significance and intelligibility. *The World in Revolt*, on the other hand, presents disjointed scenes of floods, refugees, guerilla warfare, and young China looking to the future, without any indication of who the people are, where they are, what they are fleeing from, when the events took place—and not a single reference to Chiang Kai-Shek. This absence of essential documentary detail, without which a news-reel compilation is valueless, and the omission of outstandingly relevant material, are to be found in all the sequences of this film. No reference is made to anything achieved in the U.S.S.R. since the Revolution. In Austria, Socialists are bombarded and Dolfuss is murdered, but we are not told why. At the end of a confusing sequence of successive revolts in Cuba, sugar is mentioned for the first time in the commentator's last remark. The story of "revolt" in Italy reveals none, but only a picture of Mussolini's achievements, without any reference to Abyssinia. The story of Hitler's rise in Germany is compressed into unintelligibility. In France we see Stavisky's grave but not De La Rocque. America is having industrial troubles and there is the C.I.O. Civil War in Spain just breaks out, after an election, in July 1936, and no reference is made to volunteers or German or Italian intervention. In all these countries we find unrest and violence and the news-reels have filmed so much of it that this compilation can last for over an hour. But Great Britain is now, thanks to the National Government, peaceful and prosperous; re-arming, it is true, but in order to preserve the balance of power and to bring peace to the nations of the world. This sequence with its scenes of cricket on village greens, lovers in punts (a studio shot) and young birds in nests, which seems, unlike the rest of the film, to have been made in England, and the way in which the film seems to have been abridged for exhibition in this country, reveal its true purpose. War is news, suffering (but not in England, please) is box-office. Knowledge and understanding are not. Or are they? *The March of Time* will show.

W. F.



War in China: March of Time

Radio



Our Island Nation

M.G.M.

OUR ISLAND NATION (Great Britain)

Production: Educational and General Services. *Direction:* Commander John Hunt. *Photography:* S. Raymond Elton. *Distribution:* M.G.M.

LOW WATER (Great Britain)

Scenario and Direction: E. Arnot Robertson. *Photography:* H. E. Turner. *Distribution:* A.B.F.D.

Our Island Nation was made in close collaboration with the Admiralty; indeed it could not otherwise have been made; and is intended to explain why we need a Navy and what it does in peace time against the event of war. The film is remarkable for its magnificent and informative photography. Never before, I am prepared to risk saying, has such an impression of the size, power, complexity and beauty of modern ships been so effectively conveyed. And the destruction, too, that these particular kinds of ships will let loose on each other when they join battle, perhaps in this same Mediterranean where now they play their war games. But of these things not a word.

Here the keynote is the beauty of mechanical power set against the natural power and beauty of calm seas and, most impressively, of a turbulent gale; ships steal out from Malta in a misty dawn, steam in line silhouetted against the sky, plough a dappled-grey, white-flecked road through black seas, roll and ride, and cut through waves as high as themselves; lines of grey, white-nosed guns slowly rise, are momentarily convulsed as they belch out grey-black smoke, swing easily back to rest, and then the rhythm starts again; aeroplanes rise and dive in gracious curves, based on the flat surface of the ships and the sea.

All this is excellently done, but it is spoiled by a tedious scenario which continually breaks up the continuity of the story of the ships, and almost makes it impossible to enjoy what is good in the film. This is no fault of Stanley Holloway's who plays a straight part as a chief yeoman of signals explaining the manœuvres to his brother-in-law and two nephews. He does well what the scenario demands of him; but why all these interpolations, and if a "story" was necessary why could it not have arisen naturally out of the real material? The manœuvres needed explanation to lay audiences, but this "story" only adds confusion. "The public must have a 'story'"; "You must remember the Box Office"; "And then, you know, there is the quota business". These things have spoiled many a good film and will continue to do so until the public is given the benefit of its intelligence and until padding out documentary films with studio scenes is no longer necessary.

The producers of *Low Water* also had to face the same kind of problems, intensified by the more humble but no less beautiful nature of the material which they wished to present to the ordinary cinema audience. Their solution not only does not distract or dissipate interest but actually makes the subject matter more intelligible and gives it genuine suspense and human interest. A barge mate who has been out of work for months gets a day's work on a Thames Estuary sailing barge. Will he remember what to do and how to do it; and, has he the strength to do it after so long without sufficient food? Can he turn a day's work into a permanent job? His questions and answers to himself tell us what we need to know to understand how the barge is worked, and we share naturally in the excitement and pleasure of the work. An intelligently conceived, well made, good-looking film.

W. F.

TEN BOOKS ON MOVIES REVIEWED

MOVIES FOR THE MILLIONS. Gilbert Seldes. *Batsford*. 7s. 6d.

Anyone who has tried to formulate his own ideas, to give a talk, or most rash, to write about the Cinema, knows how difficult it is to take cognisance of all the facts, how easy it is, by keeping to an arbitrarily chosen theme, to arrive at dogmatic and impressive conclusions. The Cinema is an Art; it is an Industry. The Cinema is Dope for the masses; it is the most powerful medium of Education in the modern world. The basis of Cinema is Reality; it is Escape. The public gets the films it deserves; the public takes what it is given. Garbo is a great actress; acting has no place on the screen. The Soviet directors were the first to discover the qualities peculiar to Film; Griffith did it all in 1913 but did not bother to write about it. Colour and stereoscopy must come; *they* will certainly kill Cinema. Anyhow what does it matter? The Cinema is controlled by the Jews; by the Catholics; by the Puritans; by reactionary politicians; by international financiers.

All of these and many similar contentions, contradictory as they may seem, are part of the truth. The book still waits to be written that will co-ordinate the history, psychology, sociology, economics, and æsthetics of the Cinema. But Gilbert Seldes has succeeded in writing a well-balanced, lucid, and short book in which proper account is taken of all the seemingly conflicting elements. It is the best book on the Cinema, as a whole, which has appeared for many years. Those who have read all the books will find this one stimulating and interesting; newcomers will find it the best introduction to a fascinating and important subject. It is a pity that it does not give a fuller appraisal of the modern documentary and educational film as it has developed in England during the last five years, on a bibliography of books devoted to the many themes and subjects which are necessarily only adumbrated here. But these are minor criticisms and the first the author meets in the foreword where he states that he is dealing principally with America; for British documentaries are only now beginning to be shown in America and, apart from *The March of Time* which the author deals with, production of documentary in America is only just beginning. The treatment of British films generally is brief but proportionately just; and few would dispute the assessment of the faults of British production.

It is not possible by summary or quotation to give an adequate idea of the author's historical perspective and critical perception. One can only mention as typical his chapters on sex films and the significance of Mae West; on comedy from Mack Sennett to Disney, with its careful analysis of Chaplin, Keaton, Lloyd and the Marx Brothers; on the star system and which comes first, the star or the film; on Griffith and the Soviet directors; his criticisms of individual films such as *Lost Horizon*, *Modern Times*, *Caligari* and *Potemkin*; his insistence throughout that movies must move, whatever else they do or do not do, and his plea to filmgoers to exercise *their* control over the billions of dollars of *their* money which are spent in producing movies.

The book is further distinguished by its illustrations; they have been carefully selected, they really do illustrate

the text, they are not hackneyed and the quality of reproduction is astonishingly good, especially when the age of some of the photographs is realised.

WILLIAM FARR

THE SEVEN SOVIET ARTS. Kurt London. *Faber & Faber*. 15s.

"A judgment on the Soviet Union without knowledge of the cultural activities of the country must be incomplete, even erroneous." For this reason Dr. London's book is important and might well be taken as a complement to the Webbs' *Soviet Communism*, which strangely neglects the arts. The author is honest, painstaking, intelligent; and his book is informative.

Invited to Russia on the strength of his book *Film Music*, Dr. London cannot be said to have gone with any anti-Soviet bias. In *Film Music* he had shown himself sympathetic to "the present tendency of society towards collectivism—the abandonment of the individualism on which the culture of the last century was intrinsically based". In the U.S.S.R. he found a general promotion of intellectual life unparalleled in the West. He found art the concern not of a clique but of an entire people. He found a demand for artists far outstripping the supply. He found the artists themselves, thanks to their various associations, living in a kind of paradise, where "life was easy and pleasant and entirely free from material worries." He found a new body—the Central Art Committee—charged with the supreme direction of artistic endeavour.

But artists in Western countries, it seems, have still something to be thankful for. If they are left to starve they are also left free to follow the inner light; in Russia they are fed, but only on condition that they produce to order. All individualism in style is to-day resisted, and this, ironically enough, just when the portrayal of individuals is being encouraged.

"A new riddle of the Russian Sphinx," says Dr. London, "has to be solved. Everything that we members of the Western orbit of culture call 'modern art' is emphatically rejected in U.S.S.R. That which seems to us obsolete, antiquated, even reactionary, is encouraged." What the leaders of the Soviet State have not understood they have negatived. Stalin's taste in music has not advanced beyond Tschaikovsky, so *Pravda* suddenly wipes the floor with Russia's most brilliant young composer, Shostakovich, and demands "natural human music" instead of "Leftish chaos." (Dr. London quotes the notorious review in full). Not a voice is raised to tell *Pravda* not to make an ass of itself. Eisenstein is contemptuously referred to in the *Soviet Encyclopaedia* as a petty bourgeois. "If he were to turn his *Potemkin* to-day," says Dr. London, "it would be shelved."

In the chapter dealing specifically with films Dr. London describes the organisation of the industry and tells how woefully, in quantity as well as quality, recent production has fallen below official expectations. Partly he blames the technical deficiencies of the studios, partly the lack of artistic personnel; but above these he places "the ukase of the new principles of art." He suspects that "it is no accident that intense activity on the part of second-rate

directors has recently eclipsed the work of the great men of the films." The leading people have ceased to lead because they are afraid of being too venturesome.

In his criticism of individual films Dr. London is perhaps too exclusively concerned with their contribution to the theory of film-sound, and occasionally he seems too harsh. After all, there were passages of imaginative sound in *The Road to Life* and even in *The Youth of Maxim*. But, on the basis of the films shown to me in Moscow in 1935 I cannot quarrel with Dr. London's general conclusions. Although the Russians were the first to realise the artistic implications of sound their current films are adding little to the art of sound-film. In the other microphonic arts—radio and gramophone—Dr. London finds the same lack of "microgenic" feeling. I wish that he had said something of the recent changes in camera technique—the passion for interminable tracking shots, for instance.

The chapter on children's films is of great interest and should be studied over here. Films are specially produced: (1) for children up to 8; (2) for children 8–12; (3) for children 12–17. "Historical films," "entertainment films which also give some instruction," and "films intended to promote citizenship and explain the contemporary society"—these are the main types of films produced. These are, of course, quite distinct from the instructional films shown in schools. The films at present vary in quality, but Dr. London feels that before long they will be playing "a part of enormous importance" in the province of education. ERNEST DYER

FILM MAKING FROM SCRIPT TO SCREEN. Andrew Buchanan. *Faber & Faber*. 5s.

SOUND RECORDING FOR FILMS. W. F. Elliott. *Pitman*. 10s. 6d.

Mr. Buchanan's volume of good advice to amateurs (and to professionals too, if they will listen, says the author emphatically, in his preface) is divided into two parts: the first, and major part, an analysis in simple terms of properly-ordered film-production through all its stages, the second, a number of suggestions for the making of particular types of non-fiction film.

When Mr. Buchanan is discussing the details of method, he can be most informative. Chapter VI, entitled "Prelude to Cutting," is a first-class instance of this, and no amateur who wishes to know the best way to sort out his material should fail to study it. But when the writer takes wing into the stratosphere of theory, as he often does, he is not always so happy. His views on the demerits of the talking-film, as expressed, for example, on page 181, are neither novel nor logically sound; and even when he is ramming home his idea of the fictional-documentary he does not do it in the clearest possible way, or he would undoubtedly have given the Americans more credit in that field. His article on *The Edge of the World* in this issue of SIGHT AND SOUND should help to elucidate his meaning. Incidentally, he quotes on page 91 the familiar passage, from *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, of the shrieking woman and the whistling train, but oddly enough in the wrong order. However, he has much to say that is of interest, and when he is on his own ground he is well worth reading.

At uneven intervals Mr. Elliott, too, rides his hobby-horse, an erratic Pegasus wandering in the upper air. As a good sound-recorder, he does not agree with Mr.

Buchanan that the visual image is the chief thing that matters; but he is at one with him over the undesirability of synchronised dialogue, and quotes an early book of Pudovkin's as an authority. He adheres to the uncomplicated doctrine that the linking-up of half-related sounds and pictures is the height of inspiration. The device may well have its value; but not, surely, in the highly simplified form in which Mr. Elliott states it and his documentary friends put it into practice. Only Hitchcock, in *Secret Agent*, seems to have understood how to use it properly. It is also worth while nailing the fallacy, here set forth, that it is ever reasonable for a commentary (as in *Shipyard*) to be half-drowned by atmospheric effects. A commentator cannot normally be conceived of as a concrete personality *within* a film, but is, rather, an impersonal voice on a separate plane; and therefore the suggestion given means confusion between two quite different aspects of descriptive technique.

These divagations are a pity; for again, as in the previous book, the writer has many good points to make when he is on his own ground—which is chiefly technical. On sound-perspective and level-continuity, on dubbing, on re-recording, on certain vexed questions to do with musical registration, and the like, he writes from a more immediate, and thus essentially more enlightening experience. If he had only forgone the temptation of surging off every now and then from the main topic into generalities, partial repetitions, or cloudy æsthetics, he would have given himself considerably greater opportunities. As it is, he leaves it to the reader to do the pruning. ARTHUR VESSELO

HOLLYWOOD'S MOVIE COMMANDMENTS. Olga J. Martin. *H. W. Wilson Company, New York*. \$2.75.

This book is essential to any proper understanding of the film industry to-day. It recounts, with considerable documentation and illustration, the history of the clean screen movement from 1922, when the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of American Inc. was formed, to the operation to-day of the Production Code drawn up in 1930. On these matters the author should be well-informed since she was formerly secretary to Mr. Joseph Breen, the director of the Production Code Administration; she is in complete sympathy with the Code and has no doubt about its efficacy and desirability. Others may see in the Code a modern casuistry for a modern religion, which has most peculiar results, and in the author's demonstrations of "common sense" and "common decency" insuperable obstacles to the development of intelligent and æsthetically satisfying films. For while a large part of the Code is superficially concerned with the "proper" portrayal of sex and crime, it becomes clear from the author's elaborations of the Code's injunctions and from the film examples cited, that the total effect of the Code is to discourage anything but highly romanticised treatment of real problems, and to force producers to ignore real life as the millions of filmgoers know it. The eternal triangle, in fact, may be the theme for romance or comedy, but not for drama. The book demands not a review by a journalist but a book as long and detailed from a psychologist or a sociologist. Not because these writers would necessarily be right, but because it is time that the film industry passed from an improvised morality continually adapted to meet the attacks of any highly organised minority, to a scientific code. W.F.

HOLLYWOOD THROUGH THE BACK DOOR. E. Nils Holstius. Bles. 10s. 6d.

Mr. Holstius would probably not dispute the statement that this book tells us much more about Mr. Holstius than about Hollywood. This is not meant to suggest that he may not give, as the publishers claim, "a remarkable picture of Hollywood as it really is." But anyone who came to London, disguised himself as a ship's mate, lived in Soho or Limehouse, knocked around picking up odd jobs, and then presented himself at Denham with an introduction as a possible scenario-writer, might well find that life was a bit hard and that film studio executives are busy people who do not fulfil the promises which they make with so much charm and enthusiasm. Such experiences in any large centre of population would make interesting reading, and Mr. Holstius' low-life and low-haunt experiences are no exception. But he contributes little to our knowledge of the Hollywood that we knew existed behind the glamorous screen which the film fan writers (and the film publicity men) so studiously maintain for their commercial purposes. Hollywood is very much like any other large manufacturing town except that it manufactures films. It is difficult to get into the factories, and it is even more difficult, whatever your reputation and your recommendations, to jump into a responsible position in the manufacture of a highly expensive article. Mr. Holstius' experiences should be a warning to others, whether they are seeking work in the film industry at Pinewood or in Hollywood. W.F.

MOVIE MERRY-GO-ROUND. J. P. Carstairs. *Newnes*. 7s. 6d.

The publisher's "blurb" describes Mr. Carstairs' book as: "A breezy, half-technical, half-popular account of the whole business of cinema from casting to ballyhoo, from the studio to the local cinema." I personally found the breeziness of his style irritated me intensely right up to "FADE OUT . . . THE END" on page 240. The book is nevertheless quite a useful though slight introduction to the many people whose efforts go to make the finished film. Perhaps the wisest thing that the author has done is to persuade a number of friends such as Walt Disney, Adrian, Jessie Matthews, and Adrian Brunel to contribute brief accounts of their own bit of the picture business. Some of these are easily the most interesting portions of the book. Perc Westmore, for instance, writes on "Corrective Make-Up," which lets us into the secrets of the make-up room. For instance in one of her films Joan Blondell was given a No. 6 foundation, a No. 3 highlight, a No. 9 shadow, some No. 2 over the eyes, No 22 lip rouge, black mascara and brown pencil, a darker shade of No. 26 powder on the face with No. 28 as a shadow below the cheek bones and neck! And all of this is plotted on a chart. Adrian is just as interesting on costume designing. He explains amongst other things why one has to be so careful to have everything of the best: the close-up magnifies eight times, and in such circumstances machine-embroidery, cheap fabric, bad workmanship stands out pitifully. Mr. Carstairs' own best chapter is on film-editing, since he knows the job so intimately himself. Ivor Montagu contributes a very interesting chapter, which has no relevance to the rest of the book, on the decline of the German Film Trade.

OLIVER BELL

MODERN PHOTOGRAPHY 1937-8. *Studio*. 7s. 6d. and 5s.

This year's edition, like its predecessors, should prove of interest not only to photographers, though technical

details are given which may well prove useful even to the advanced worker, but also to all who are prepared to treat the visible world as a possible source of pleasure. It is agreeable to note the very wide range of subject-matter in these pages from which the patience and ingenuity of the photographer have wrung flashes of visual beauty. Students of the bizarre will appreciate Dr. Cray's two hornets (apparently as large as puppies) looking over the edge of a glass vessel. Symptomatic of what is best in modern photographic tendencies is an almost complete absence of any attempt to get "artistic" results by imitating the stock effects of popular painters.

From the purely technical point of view the work in colour is no doubt the most remarkable. None the less it is mostly far from satisfying to the eye. For the uncoloured reproductions there is nothing but praise.

H. D. WALEY

IDEAS FOR SHORT FILMS. Alex Strasser. *Link House*. 2s.

Mr. Strasser has followed up his useful book *Amateur Films* by *Ideas for Short Films*, in which the emphasis falls on what to film rather than how to film it. There is no doubt that the amateur short film is a form of art full of unexplored possibilities. Like all forms of art it can only reach achievement through spontaneous self-expression by individuals or groups. Still, even artistic enthusiasm often requires to be liberated in a particular direction and guided in the niceties of technique, and it is these functions which this book is well designed to perform. Every owner of a ciné camera who is interested in the creative aspect of his hobby should acquire this book. H. D. W.

MODERN MAKE-UP FOR STAGE AND SCREEN. N. E. B. Wolters. *Lovat Dickson*. 3s. 6d.

This handbook to the science and art of make-up for professionals and amateurs, which was first published in 1935, has now been revised and an additional chapter has been added on the particular make-up problems presented by television and colour photography. The treatment is comprehensive and detailed and, in addition to a number of photographs illustrative of what can be achieved by good make-up, the book also contains a handy reference chart for fifteen male and female characters ranging from juvenile man to Japanese, Chinese, Persian and Egyptian.

HOW TO USE THE EDUCATIONAL SOUND FILM. M. R. Brunstetter. *University of Chicago Press and Cambridge University Press*. 9s.

VISUALISING THE CURRICULUM. Charles F. Hoban, Charles F. Hoban, Jr. and Samuel B. Zizman. *Gordon Company, New York*. \$3.30.

MOTION PICTURE IN EDUCATION, THE. *American Council on Education, Washington*. 10 cents.

TEACHING WITH MOTION PICTURES. *American Council on Education, Washington*. 40 cents.

These four publications, dealing with the theory and practice of the use of films in education in America, will be reviewed in the next issue of SIGHT AND SOUND.

CORRECTION

The price of *The Complete Projectionist*, reviewed in the last issue of SIGHT AND SOUND, is 5s. not 3s. 6d.

THE CINEMA IN EDUCATION

News of the Quarter: More projectors in schools; B.F.I. Reports and Film Catalogues; Teachers in conference; New uses for educational films; More opportunities for teachers to see educational films and school projectors

B.F.I. REGIONAL CONFERENCES

The first of the regional conferences on Films for Schools being organised by the British Film Institute will be held in Manchester on November 25th. Invitations to attend have been sent to all chairmen and directors of local education committees in Lancashire and Cheshire. The chair will be taken by Sir Charles Cleland, Chairman of the Governing Board of the Institute. At the first session the main speech will be given by Mr. S. H. Wood, Director of the Department of Intelligence and Public Relations at the Board of Education, on visual aids to education with special reference to the use of films. The second session will take the form of a discussion between representatives of those education committees which have had some experience in promoting the use of films in schools and those which have not. In this discussion five or six directors have undertaken to speak. A programme of educational films will be shown to those attending and they will be provided by the Institute with literature giving comprehensive information on the present supply of projectors and films.

The second of these regional conferences will be held in Leeds in the spring of 1938.

PROJECTORS IN SCHOOLS

Since the last issue of SIGHT AND SOUND the British Film Institute has received particulars of a further 104 projectors installed in schools or owned by local education authorities. An analysis of the present total of 916 projectors is given below; this table supersedes that given in the last issue of SIGHT AND SOUND and will be revised in every future issue as further information is received in reply to the B.F.I. questionnaire and as new projectors are installed.

It must be emphasised that the figures given here relate only to full-time educational institutions which form part of the regular educational system from the Primary School (or its equivalent) to the Technical College and University. The figures do not include projectors belonging to and used by churches (there are said to be 1,000 churches using projectors), voluntary adult education organisations such as Settlements, Women's Institutes, Co-operative Societies, or libraries and museums.

B.F.I. REPORTS

Three Reports on the use of films in schools have now been published by the British Film Institute: on *History Teaching Films* (reviewed in SIGHT AND SOUND No. 21), *Science Teaching Films* (reviewed in this issue) and *Foreign Language Teaching Films*; the series will be completed with a Report on *Geography Teaching Films*. Each Report contains a complete list, at the time of publication, of 16mm. films on the subject in question. The Reports are issued free to members of the Institute and may be obtained by non-members at 7½d. each, including postage. The lists of 16mm. films are also published separately.

The absence of any 16mm. films, practically speaking, designed for teaching foreign languages (there are two on French produced by G.B. Instructional) presented the Languages and Literature Committee with a different and more difficult problem than had to be faced by the other committees. It was bound to work out general theories which were consonant with sound principles of foreign language teaching. The Committee suggests that in the first stages of language teaching two types of films would be useful. First, films on sound production and intonation made by expert teachers of phonetics and, secondly, very simple films presenting short scenes from the life of the country which will arouse and stimulate interest and curiosity by bringing reality into the classroom. The language of these should not, however, be childish. It is reckoned that if each film were of five minutes' duration and contained 250 to 350 words, in the first year the children would acquire a vocabulary of 500 words firmly fixed in their memories. In the middle school stage the scope of the films would be extended to include films on as many normal activities of ordinary people in other countries as is possible. In the last stages of school life use would be made of entertainment and documentary films produced for audiences to whom the language is native.

An appendix to the Report gives a brief statement on the use being made by branches of the Modern Languages Association of such films. These branches present programmes of films at public cinemas to large audiences of

	England and Wales							Scotland							Grand Totals
	9.5mm	16mm. silent	9.5 & 16mm.	16mm. sound	35mm. silent	35mm. sound	Totals	9.5mm	16mm. silent	9.5 & 16mm.	16mm. sound	35mm. silent	35mm. sound	Totals	
Primary, Senior Elementary and Central Schools	124	159	67	44	54	8	456	9	95	6	—	1	—	111	567
Secondary Schools	14	59	11	37	16	8	145	8	32	3	3	1	—	47	192
Technical Colleges, Universities, etc.	1	40	3	6	12	7	69	—	5	1	3	5	—	14	83
L.E.A.'s for general use	1	19	7	20	1	—	48	5	17	4	—	—	—	26	74
Totals	140	277	88	107	83	23	718	22	149	14	6	7	—	198	916

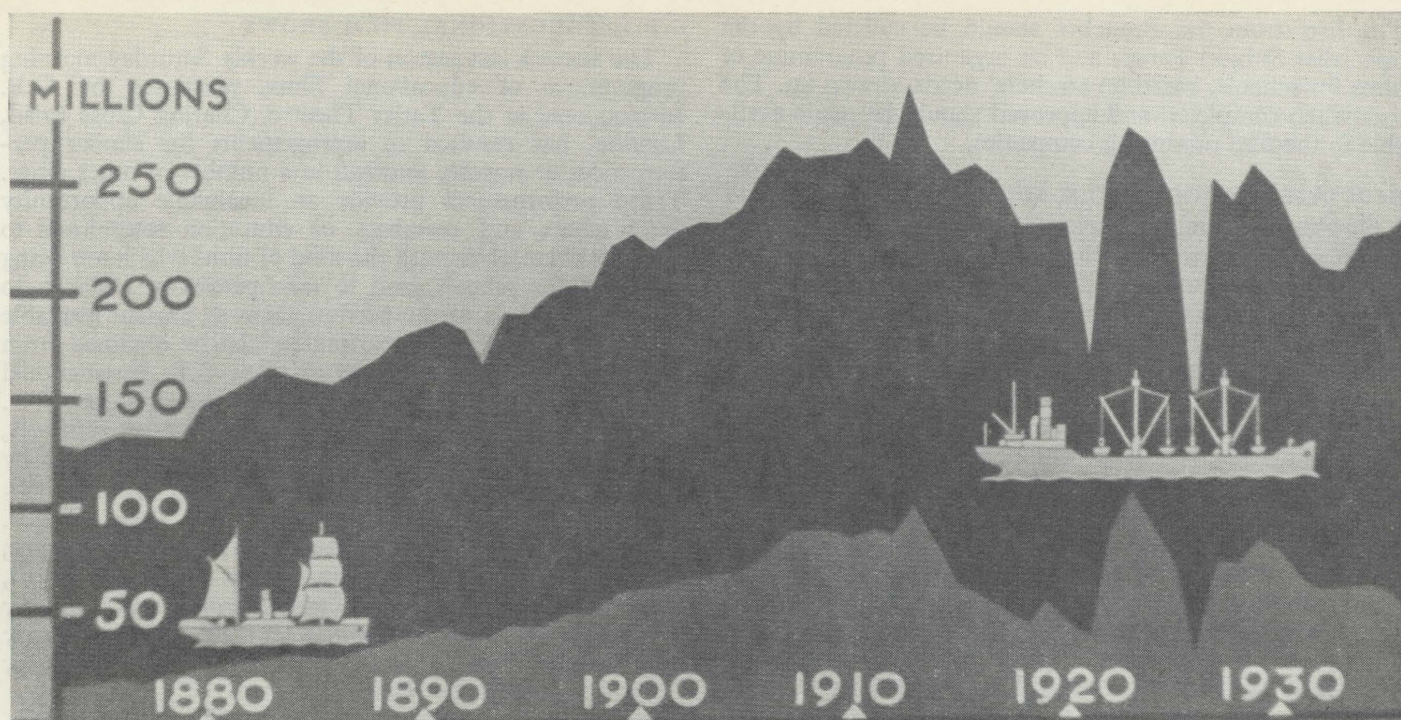


Diagram from *Some Aspects of the Coal Industry*

G.B. Instructional

secondary school children. To promote this work the Institute has also now published a comprehensive list of *Foreign 35 mm. Films* (price 7½d. including postage).

A further appendix to the Report contains suggestions for a series of a dozen films for French language teaching proposed by Monsieur E. M. Stephan.

S.E.F.A. AND FILM SUPPLY

The Scottish Educational Film Association has held a week-end Conference at the E.I.S. Hostel, Cambusbarron, Stirling, to formulate an agreed policy on the type of films required for Scottish schools. The conference was attended by 100 representatives of the eight branches of the Association—which now has a membership of nearly 4,000 teachers. After an opening address by Mr. J. B. Frizell, Director of Education for Edinburgh, and president of the Association, the conference first reviewed the progress which is being made in reviewing and classifying existing films for the guidance of teachers. For the discussion on what types of films are required a report had been prepared which suggested that films can be divided into four classes on the basis of the probable functions of films in the classroom and the conclusions of the report seemed to have been generally approved. There was considerable difference of opinion about the use of sound films and also about the value of colour films. A summary of the report follows.

The Lesson Film, including revision films, is the core of a lesson which is built round it, and the lesson is one that can form part of the normal course of study. There is a need for Lesson Films produced specifically for (1) Infants, (2) Elementary Schools, on a subject basis, and (3) Secondary Schools, on a subject basis. They should be designed to fit into the existing curriculum with the minimum of adjustment. There is scope for Lesson Films incorporating sound (1) in the presentation of certain subjects such as music, foreign languages; (2) in the presentation of lessons where (a) close co-ordination of eye and ear is demanded

from the pupil, *e.g.*, in the study of certain scientific processes and in studies of movement, and (b) “atmosphere” in a film enhances its reality; here the use of natural sound and dialogue will be helpful.

The Illustrative Film is designed to illustrate a point or points in a lesson. The film here is essentially a better, and more vivid illustration. There is a need for more films of this type and for considerable experimenting in the use of them. The addition of sound to the illustrative film is only useful within narrow limits.

The Background Film is one designed to extend the child’s knowledge of his environment, its subject matter not being specifically part of the normal course of study. These films would include: (a) documentary films, (b) travel films, (c) films of civic activities, (d) films of industrial processes, (e) popular science films, (f) vocational guidance films. There exists quite a large supply of films of this type from which at this stage a fairly satisfactory choice can be made. No special effort will be necessary to maintain production at a pace requisite to meet the demand for films of this type. The sound employed in background films must have some relation to the age group for which the film is designed. Such films will generally be more effective with more advanced pupils. To ensure the greatest success with this type of film, there is room for research to discover the most profitable teaching technique.

The Cultural Film is one used to illustrate the art of the cinema. These films will be used for their intrinsic worth as films. The use of this type of film is at present essentially a problem for the individual enthusiast and for research. An adequate supply of suitable film for test purposes is to be found in existing sub-standard libraries.

In order that the advice and assistance of teachers might be effectively used in promoting the production of the kind of films they want it was suggested that the Study Groups of the S.E.F.A. Branches should be consulted and with their assistance lists of themes for films should be compiled.

The lists from the Branches should be collated by the Specialist Subject Panels and an organised programme of films for schools, based on teachers' needs, drawn up. The lists when completed and approved should be made available to the film producing companies.

MIDDLESEX SCHOOLS FILM SOCIETY

One hundred teachers have already joined the Middlesex Schools Film Society which was inaugurated at a meeting held on September 27th. During the present school term demonstrations of 16mm. projectors—five sound, six silent—will be arranged by Educational and General Services at Wembley, Twickenham and New Southgate so as to enable teachers from the three divisions of the area covered by the Middlesex Education Committee to see the projectors. Lectures at the Middlesex Guildhall, Westminster, have been arranged for November 4th at 6.30 when Mr. Russell Ferguson, Education Officer, G.P.O. Film Unit, will speak and for December 2nd at 6.30, when Mr. G. J. Cons, Lecturer in Geography, Goldsmith's College, will speak on the use of films in the teaching of geography. The Society also intends to form a Production Unit. All members of the Society receive as part of their yearly subscription a copy of the *Monthly Film Bulletin* issued by the British Film Institute. The Hon. Secretary is C. Smith, Wembley Hill Senior School, High Road, Wembley.

WAVERTREE SCHOOLS' CINEMA ASSOCIATION, LIVERPOOL

Since its inauguration in October, 1935, the Wavertree Schools' Cinema Association has arranged exhibitions of educational films every month. Two shows have been held every morning from 9.50 to 10.50 and from 11.0 to 12 noon. The number of scholars attending has been 735 and 770 respectively. Under the supervision of their teachers, these children are drawn from eleven schools of varying types embracing thirteen departments. In order to defray the cost of renting films, hiring the cinema, and incidental expenses, each school contributes one penny per head per child, an arrangement which has proved quite satisfactory. After twenty-two months' experience, during which time eighty-six films have been exhibited, the Association is of the opinion that (1) The Local Authority should be approached with a view to providing a grant to cover all expenses; (2) Mass demonstrations, although of great value, should be regarded only as stepping stones to the classroom use of films; (3) Those whose work it is to produce educational films should cater, in the main, for the younger children, and in so doing foster at an early age a keener interest in visual education.

SAFETY IN MINES

At the annual conference of mining teachers, organised by the Safety in Mines Research Board at its station at Buxton, one session was devoted to the use of films. An officer of the British Film Institute addressed the conference and suggested that films might be used (a) for general safety propaganda among miners, (b) for instruction in safety methods, (c) for research into problems affecting safety and (d) for familiarising the general public with the nature of the miners' work. A number of 16 mm. silent instructional films have been made by officers of the Department and successfully used. Captain H. F. C. Crookshank, Secretary for Mines, was present at the meeting which ended with a discussion and the exhibition of *Coal*, a film produced by G.B. Instructional with the collaboration of the Safety in Mines Research Board.

G.B.I. EDUCATIONAL FILM SHOWS

The success last season of the weekly Saturday morning programmes of educational films, presented by G.B. Instructional at the Tatler Theatre, Charing Cross Road, London, has resulted in arrangements for similar performances at monthly intervals in a number of other cities. These performances provide an invaluable opportunity for teachers and members of education committees to acquaint themselves with the kind of films which are being produced for schools, and to take parties of children to see them. Details of the performances at present available are given here. Further particulars can be obtained from the Managers of the cinemas or from G.B. Instructional Film Bureau, Film House, Wardour Street, London, W.1. The titles given indicate the themes of the programmes, each of which consists of four or five films produced by G.B. Instructional, G.P.O. Film Unit, Gas Industry, etc.

LONDON: Tatler Theatre, Charing Cross Road, W.C.1. 12 noon, 6d. and 1s. October 2nd, *The Nineteenth Century*; 9th, *The Country in Autumn*; 16th, *Mountains*; 23rd, *Aquatic Life*; 30th (at 11.30 a.m.), *Merlusse and La Gare*; November 6th, *Physical Geography*; 13th, *Public Services*; 20th, *Ecology*; 27th, *Winter Games and Physical Education*; December 4th, *Polar Regions*.

EDINBURGH: New Picture House, Princes Street. 10.30 a.m. 3d. and 6d. October 23rd, *The Country and the Town*.

GLASGOW: Picture House, Sauchiehall Street. 10.30 a.m. 3d. and 6d. November 6th, *Coasts and the Seashore*.

LEEDS: Tatler Theatre, Boar Lane. 11 a.m. 6d. and 1s. October 23rd, *The Country in Autumn*; November 27th, *Nineteenth Century History*.

MANCHESTER: Tatler Theatre, Oxford Street. 10.30 a.m. 6d. and 1s. October 23rd, *Nineteenth Century History*; November 27th, *The Country in Autumn*.

NEWCASTLE: News Theatre, Pilgrim Street. 10.30 a.m. 6d. and 1s. November 6th, *Coal and Railways*; December 4th, *Natural Protection in Plants and Animals*.

SAFETY FIRST ON THE ROADS

A programme of Safety First films was presented on October 7th to 200 delegates attending the National Safety Congress. The programme consisted of *Safer Beckenham*, a 16mm. one-reel silent film made by the Beckenham Safety First Council; *Better Safe Than Sorry*, a 35mm. sound film lasting forty-five minutes made for the Children's Safety Crusade; and *The Wheels of Pleasure, Part 2*, a 16mm. silent film lasting five minutes made for the Junior Road Fellowship by the Raleigh Cycle Company. *Safer Beckenham* deals entirely with behaviour on the roads and is addressed to motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians. Good and bad, right and wrong behaviour are effectively and amusingly demonstrated. *Better Safe Than Sorry* is addressed to children, and the right and wrong way of behaving at home, work, play, and on the roads, if unnecessary pain and suffering is to be avoided, are demonstrated in a story about the Carter family who are seen at home, travelling on the railway and on the road, and on holiday at a country farm and at the seaside. The film ends with the Safety First Song, which the audience of children are asked to sing, and the Safety Promise, which the children are asked to repeat after the modern Pied Piper who introduces and comments on the film. *The Wheels of Pleasure* is addressed to children who ride bicycles and deals with the importance of keeping brakes, tyres, etc. in good condition and of observing the rules of the road.

SOCIAL SERVICE

In the last issue of *SIGHT AND SOUND* we reviewed *To-day We Live*. A two-reel film on the same subject, directed by R. I. Grierson, for non-theatrical exhibition and available on 16mm. sound (apply to the National Council of Social Service), is now finished under the title *To-day and To-morrow*. The film, which is introduced by Viscount Bledisloe and ends with an appeal by the Duke of Kent on behalf of the National Council of Social Service, presents a survey of the Council's work, including work in the depressed areas, the villages, and the new housing estates, and in organising children's holiday camps. Howard Marshall is again the commentator, Mr. Shoeten Sack and Sir Wyndham Deedes describe some of the work, and an unemployed miner, a lorry driver living on a housing estate, and the blacksmith from South Cerney are also brought to the camera and the microphone.

Strand Films have also completed *Here is the Land*, for the Land Settlements Association, the organisation established in 1934 under the Ministry of Agriculture to settle families from the depressed areas on small holdings. The film, which is directed by Stanley Hawes, is two reels in length and will be available on 16mm. sound. It demonstrates the work of the Association through a family from

Durham who are given a small holding in Cambridgeshire, complete with house, outbuildings, tools, equipment and some stock. For fifteen months training is provided, after which the man becomes a full tenant. An important feature of the scheme is the co-operative buying of equipment and stock and selling of products.

FRANCE, GERMANY, AND U.S.S.R.

In the next issue of *SIGHT AND SOUND* we shall publish the first of a series of articles by Mr. F. W. Wilkinson, Headmaster of the Latymer Upper School, on the production and use of educational films in France, Germany, and the U.S.S.R. The articles are based on enquiries and investigations made by Mr. Wilkinson during recent visits made for the specific purpose of finding out more exactly what these countries are doing, on what principles they are working, and how the results, in terms of films produced and the use made of them, compare with the situation in Great Britain. These articles and the conclusions at which Mr. Wilkinson has arrived should be of interest and value to all administrators, teachers, and film producers in Great Britain and should promote a more exact assessment of the significance of the statistics with which we are familiar.

G.B. INSTRUCTIONAL FILM SECTIONS

FOR PRACTICAL REASONS the length of 16mm. classroom films has become standardised at an average of 400 feet, the equivalent of 1,000 feet of 35mm. film. When a film takes more than a single reel, the material is carefully cut so that each reel can be used as a separate unit in a series.

G.B.I.'s ten-minute classroom films have now, as the result of discussions at educational conferences and reports received from teachers using our films, been supplemented by the production of 16mm. silent "two minute films." The Carrick series of films of this length which were designed to meet the requirements of the Glasgow Education Committee are well known. They show animals, birds, life on the farm and simple industrial processes in bakeries, sawmills and in the fields. They are intended primarily to supplement the use of still illustrations and picture books in junior schools.

With the wealth of material already available in the G.B.I. classroom films it would have been easy to make complete series of films of the purely illustrative type, but we considered that it should be possible to take sections from our full length films which would have not only the quality of movement but give analysis and the sequence of cause and effect that is characteristic of the complete films from which they are taken. The exact length of the sections made has, therefore, in each case been dictated by the length of the sequence of the film, making the individual section equivalent to a paragraph in the chapter of a book. Within the paragraph the material is in an ordered sequence so that the sections can be used not only to give an addition to general knowledge and widen the limits of the children's visual experience, but may be used by the individual teacher to test the children's powers of concentration, and give opportunity for exercises in correlation and deduction.

The first series of G.B.I. Film Sections have been made to illustrate the usual Geography syllabus in junior schools, including map reading and a study of the physical and

human geography of typical regions in the British Isles. They provide at the same time a series of moving pictures which can be used to show young children in towns and cities everyday life in agricultural and coastal districts, and those in the country the totally different surroundings of industrial areas.

The films, although not in themselves comprehensive teaching units, have the construction, analysis and care, the collaboration of expert and practising teachers, which went to make the complete films from which they are taken. In many areas children will see the sections again in later years in the complete films and thus revise the work done in junior schools and see the particular example in relation to the general principles studied in the senior school. In future series of "two minute films" in such subjects as Biology and Natural History, we hope to make sections specifically for senior classes. These will include records of processes of growth and microscopic analysis, to be used for detailed observation in class and for revision purposes some days or months after the full length film has been seen. When this is carried out these sections will not only serve as a link between the familiar still picture in lantern or epidiascope and the full length exposition and interpretative films, but will also provide material available whenever needed for introduction, moving illustration, analysis and revision of subjects constantly recurring in all syllabi. These sections will thus form part of a supply of a number of different types of films each of them adapted in content and treatment to a specific stage of work done in schools and each related to the other types of films which have been previously seen or will subsequently be used.

These sections can be bought outright for one guinea. We hope that this will promote wide use of them. Many individual schools as well as education authorities could form their own local libraries of these films so that they might always be available.

MARGERY LOCKET

SCIENCE TEACHING FILMS

The B.F.I. Report Reviewed by CATHERINE FLETCHER, Lecturer in Education
at Goldsmiths' College, London

IF THE READER of this Report* turns to the conclusion on page 20 he will be in a sounder position to assess the contents of it than if he starts at the beginning. "Much of the present Report," we read, "is taken up with statements of opinions rather than of facts. But little is yet definitely known in this particular field, although many of the problems could easily be investigated by accredited methods of educational research." We will not then expect too much, for the knowledge is not yet available which will give us reliable data to go upon. Nor can we expect this report to convert the sceptical education authority or the sceptical teacher, for they will need as a condition of their conversion, the conclusion suggests, "a broad basis of factual knowledge regarding the utility and value of films." So the Report ends by indicating some fields for research in the use of the science film in education.

We read in the Foreword that "a large number of questionnaires was sent out by the Science Committee of the British Film Institute. Some forty-five replies were received from educational institutions of varying types. The teachers responsible for the answers had had extensive experience in the use of films both in the classroom and as an additional school activity." In cases where there was wide divergence of opinion, the committee stated their own opinion.

THE SCOPE OF THE REPORT

We are also informed in a footnote on the first page, that the Report is "concerned with those schools which educate children and adolescents from the ages of 11 to about 18 or 19." This is a very important note, for it apparently narrows the scope of the report to secondary schools, which is a most unfortunate limitation; (unless the footnote is misleading, and the Report is intended to cover the use of science films in Post-Primary as distinct from Primary education). A far larger proportion of adolescents are educated in senior and central schools than in secondary schools and it is probable that the science film will find its most significant place in the senior and central schools, with their practical bias.

The vague definition given to the educational field covered by this Report makes it extremely difficult to review it as a particular contribution to the science teaching film. For there is no attempt in the Report to relate the film to the science curriculum in any specific type of school, and surely there is little sense in discussing the science film unless one sees it in such a relationship. The film used in connection with a specialist science course in the sixth form of a secondary school will be a very different thing from, let us say, a film used in connection with a domestic science course in a senior girls' school. This means

that the Report deals with generalisations on the use of films, silent and sound films, background and foreground films, and methods of using films (which to a large extent could apply to any educational films and not specifically to science films). There are only two or three references to particular films throughout the Report. However, at the end of it there is a most interesting comprehensive list of 16mm. films "which might be of service in the teaching of science." We will refer to this later on.

WHY FILMS SHOULD BE USED

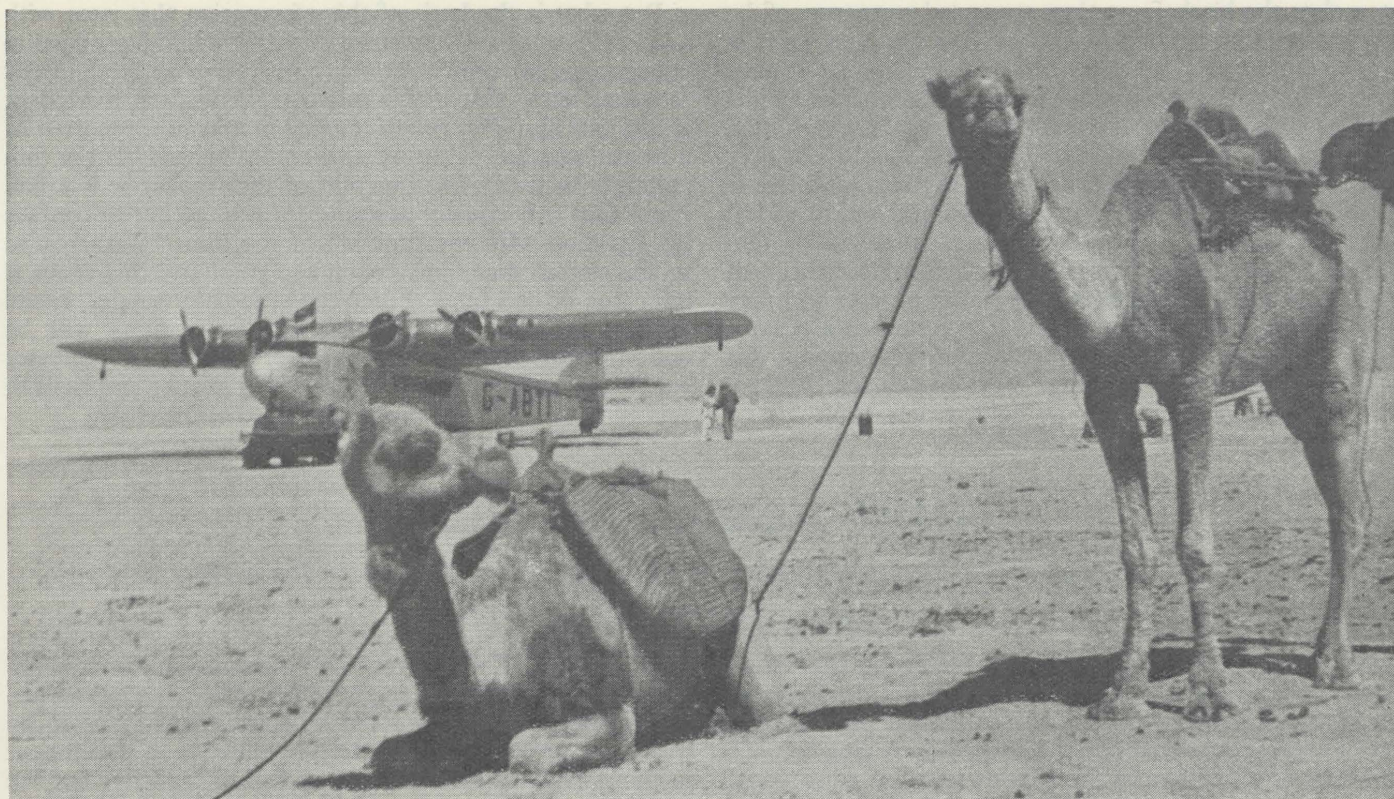
Let us look then at some of the generalisations and opinions. The first section on "Why films should be used" makes a reasonable claim for the use of science films in schools on the grounds that scientific principles can be shown at work in industrial processes in the outside world; that the biologist can show living things behaving in their normal environment; that the film can slow down or speed up processes that cannot be grasped by the eye, and is thus very useful in portraying the lives of insects, life-cycles of plants, slow-motion pictures of waves and so on; that "the cinema can present directly ideas that are dynamic," and thus has particular relevance in relation to the fundamental principles of physics, chemistry, and biology; that "by the use of films distinguished research workers can present their views to children and the experiments they have themselves devised"; and that suitable films such as that of a skilful worker dissecting, or a glass blower making a complicated piece of apparatus, can aid students in acquiring skill in experimental technique.

Whether or not these aspects of the film are widely known or accepted, they do present a good rational case for the use of science films. "And are there science films in existence which fulfil these different functions?" the teacher may well ask if he has not already turned up the appendix at the end of the Report. There he will find five pages of films on Pure Science, a few films on Physical Chemistry, Chemistry and Geology, thirteen pages of films on Botany, Physiology, and Zoology, just over a page of films on Applied Science, and eight "interviews with scientists." Far and away the greatest proportion of science films now available are those dealing with Zoology.

FILMS AVAILABLE AND FILMS NEEDED

It is natural that the largest proportion of educational films should be film descriptions of the life and habits of birds, beasts, and insects; and a great many of these films would be suitable for the eager, curious, adventurous realist of Junior school age, though the Report is not concerned with him. The films on Pure Science deal with abstractions and would be suitable for the most part for the children at the top of the Secondary school. The films on applied science are very limited in number and deal with such

*Report on Science Teaching Films (British Film Institute), 7½d., including postage.



From *The Future's in the Air*, the feature film of a series being produced by Strand Film Company for Imperial Airways. Produced by Paul Rotha and directed by Alexander Shaw, the film follows the air route from England to Australia

themes as aircraft design, radio, electricity, steam-power and water-power.

We are then faced with the fact that at present there are only a few films which in any way meet the practical, realistic bias of the science teaching in Senior and Central schools. This brings us to the recommendations that are made by the Science Committee in this Report. All these recommendations, with one exception, concern technical aspects of films and not the content. The one which concerns the content states that "Films dealing with historical developments of science are urgently needed." This is surely another way of saying another kind of historical film is needed. Are the school scientists waking up to the need for some real and human background to their teaching? No; for "opinion is opposed to the attempt to portray the pioneers themselves. It is felt that pictures of actors dressed up as Galileo or Newton might destroy the romantic aura which tends to surround these figures." Surely this is the most potent reason that could be given for dressing up these actors and filming the pioneers! It suggests that the scientist wishes the child to retain a "romantic aura" of a pioneer rather than realise him as a real man with real purposes. However a certain modified praise is given to *The Story of Louis Pasteur*, which seems to have dressed up the pioneer successfully.

THE PROPER FUNCTION OF FILMS IN EDUCATION

We must surely believe that the scientist need not only write of the world "with the cold finger of a star-fish" and that the growing adolescent will get inspiration and a realisation of the social implications of the great scientific discoveries from the human and dramatic presentation of the scientists themselves. But the Report carefully

avoids any suggestion of inspiration or social purposes.

The last four pages of the Report are concerned with methods of using science films. It is stated that there are four general methods of using silent films. First, the teacher gives a general introduction to the subject and then shows the film, which is stopped at frequent intervals while the teacher asks questions, etc. Second, when the process shown is reversible (*e.g.* functioning of a dynamo) the film is reversed and run through repeatedly until the point is driven home. Third, the film is run through without any stops and is followed by a slow and careful analysis of content. Fourth, the film is run through without any stops two or three times and the content analysed between the viewings.

The Report states that "it is impossible to say, without carrying out a great deal of objective research, which of these methods is the best." But surely the core of the matter is missed. The method must depend on the nature of the film and cannot be discussed apart from the particular film that is being shown. Therefore these generalisations on method have little value or validity. Take for example such an abstract diagrammatic film as $X + X = 0$, a symbolic film; or take a film that describes a particular process of illumination; or take a film such as wood-ants, which gives the particular drama of the life of these ants. When Miss Von Wyss demonstrated this film at the Film School this summer it was as the climax to careful observational work on the part of children. It was not intended to be seen by children unless they had observed this particular kind of ants in their native environment and then in a formicarium in the classroom. The film completed the story. Such a film is itself a unity and a continuity. It would be monstrous to stop it in the middle and

interpolate the kind of questions suggested on page 17 of the Report. Such a method would violate the film and its content and would be quite unnecessary from a narrow informative point of view when the children have done their own independent observational work. It is essential that teachers who are going to use films should not only think of teaching but of the nature of the film, and this is just as true of science films as of geographical and historical films. We must, of course, clearly distinguish such a film as that of wood-ants from an instructional sequence of celluloid which demonstrates a particular process and may be very useful as an interpolated illustration in a science lesson. There may be a good justification for stopping this at frequent intervals and asking: What do you see? What is the man holding? Why does he hold it there? etc.

But what is the basis of this assumption that even with such an instructional sequence a teacher would be obliged to concentrate on stimulating the observation of the children? It seems likely that if this insistent stimulation is needed, it is a bad film. Dr. Julian Huxley in a lecture reported in a recent number of *SIGHT AND SOUND* stated: "If the film attempts to usurp the function of the teacher it is a bad film." But it is equally unsound for the teacher to confuse his function with the function of the film. "With regard to the charge that films encourage passivity, this again is only true of bad films. Films can stimulate wonder, excite interest, or provoke curiosity; and such films will be educationally of value." The Report would carry greater conviction with teachers if it had given greater emphasis to this dynamic effect of films on the mind of the child.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND FILMS

The first of two articles by ALEXANDER MACKAY, Headmaster of Rockvilla School, a primary school in Glasgow

THE PRIMARY SCHOOL is the Cinderella of the visual education movement. An examination of the catalogue of one of the leading producers of educational films reveals that of 130 instructional films, classified according to their particular applicability to the various types of educational institution, only a meagre thirteen are grouped as appropriate for use in the Primary School. Mere numbers of schools and of school population would seem to indicate a necessity for more intensive cultivation of this potentially fruitful field on the part of the producers of educational films. The notorious "vicious circle" of visual education operates even more viciously in the field of elementary instruction.

Now that the value of visual education has been abundantly proved by research and experiment, the remedy for the state of deadlock lies in the hands of teachers and of local authorities: in the abandonment of professional conservatism on the one hand, and on the other, in the loosening of purse strings to provide equipment indispensable to a modern school.

PROJECTORS WORTH WHILE NOW

Installation of projectors need not wait upon an adequate supply of suitable films. There is much good film material available, if teachers could only be placed in a position to make use of it. A recent examination of a concise Primary School Geography of the British Isles revealed the almost astonishing fact that there are over 150 films in existence to illustrate and supplement its 120 pages. Primary teachers should no longer sit upon the fence awaiting some shadowy ideal future state of miraculously cheap projectors, accompanied by a flood of films; they should convey to their governing authorities their conviction that, although the situation is far from being as satisfactory as it may be, visual education equipment is worth while for their schools—now. Granted reasonable use of the educational film as it exists to-day, supply, quality and cost will improve by the same evolutionary process through which the Primary School text book has already passed.

Insurmountable difficulties, at any rate for the school with an electricity supply, there are none. Ready to their hands in the excellent pamphlets of the British Film Institute,

teachers will find all the technical information they require with regard to screens, projectors and cinema rooms. The ideal of an empty room of appropriate shape to be used as a projection room may be difficult of attainment in those Primary Schools that are full to capacity; but the provision of plug point and window blinds in an ordinary classroom, even though it involves the troublesome process of interchanging rooms to admit the desired class to the cinema room, is better than to deprive the school of the benefits of visual education altogether. Where the school roll is large, an endeavour should be made to persuade the governors to provide the necessary plug point and blinds in a room for each department, if only to prevent the unfortunate teacher whose room is chosen for the single cinema room from leading a somewhat nomadic existence. As presence of blinds is a hindrance to normal ventilation, instructions should be given, where there is no mechanical means of ventilation, that doors and windows should be left open after each cinema lesson. A specially prepared screen, not now prohibitively expensive, is highly desirable; for the quality of projection in the school cinema room must approximate to that to which the pupils are accustomed in the cinema houses; but, in an emergency, the reverse side of a reasonably clean wall map has been found, in a classroom of average size, a not unsatisfactory makeshift for the silver screen.

SILENT PROJECTORS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Even if questions of cost can be disregarded, the 16 mm. *silent* projector seems to be the wise choice for the Primary School. Most primary teachers are familiar with the difficulty young children have in adjusting themselves to the accent and tone of voice of a new class teacher, so that it is a fair presumption that the unfamiliar voice of even a neutral-toned commentator would be still more distracting. The apparently contradictory evidence of the attendance of young children at picture houses is inconclusive, for an examination of the reaction of young pupils to a film like *Scrooge*, where the dialogue is relatively as important as the picture, would probably indicate that much of the sound passes literally over their heads. For them quite definitely the picture is the thing. The "expert" commentator

with specialist knowledge of the subject matter, that the teacher cannot be expected to possess, has no place in the Primary School, as anything that requires specialist teaching should be outside the range of the primary curriculum. The class teacher, however, during the running of the picture, will find it helpful to provide a very limited commentary, directed entirely to assisting concentration upon the most significant features of the successive sequences as they appear upon the screen. Where sound becomes an integral part of the film, as for example in *Night Mail*, the case in favour of a sound projector becomes very strong, and to meet this a 16 mm. sound projector with an appropriate library of films should be placed at the disposal of groups of Primary Schools in each education area. The silent projector, the property of the individual school, should be of a type that is equipped with "Stop" and "Reverse," to provide for adequate repetition of salient points for the benefit of duller pupils. But the film should always be run through at least once without interruption in order that full value may be derived from the movement of the motion picture.

PLANNING FOR THE USE OF FILMS

If the school cinema is not to be regarded merely as a casual diversion from the grind of ordinary daily instruction, a definite half hour to forty minute period in the cinema room should be allotted on the time-table to each class. Reasonable elasticity of time-table will ensure that, where the film drawn from the central library provides instruction

in one subject, compensation can be made by substitution elsewhere, so that the total time devoted to each subject of the curriculum remains undisturbed. Quite emphatically every class teacher on the staff must receive the necessary few minutes of instruction on the threading of the film and the running of the projector, if only to convince the hesitant that the present day school projector requires no expert projectionist. The projector must be used with confidence as an ordinary piece of school equipment.

An ideal seldom possible of attainment in the Primary School is that each teacher should see the complete film before using it with a class. When this is impossible, class teachers should make a close study of the full notes that most producers are prepared to supply, to enable them to form a clear idea of the type of lesson best adapted to the attainment standard of their classes. Even when film notes are supplied, it is very desirable that one teacher, familiar with the special requirements of the school, should see each film as it comes in from the library and note in a Film Content Note Book a full descriptive account of the sequences of the film. The notebook is then available for circulation amongst other teachers about to use the film and will also form a valuable permanent record of films used in the school. Teaching methods will vary with the subject matter, as in all other lessons where large use is made of illustrative material. Use of the rather formidable designation, Film Teaching Technique, should not be allowed to create the impression that instruction by film is a stunt, a mystery, or the perquisite of the fanatical devotees of a cult.

G.P.O. FILMS

By J. B. HOLMES, Director of Productions, G.P.O. Film Unit

FROM 1928 TILL 1933, the film unit of the Empire Marketing Board produced more than a hundred films, which now form the basis of the Empire Film Library. These films project the Empire, providing for the people of this country a means of surveying a domain too wide and strange to be described otherwise than by film. Through the medium of the Library, they are seen by over a million people each year. The influence of the E.M.B. films thus continues and increases, though the production unit itself became the G.P.O. Film Unit in 1933.

Communications as the physical framework of modern civilisation was the new theme and since 1933 the Unit has produced 80 films. Telephone and telegraph services, cables and cable ships, sorting offices, weather forecasting, mail trains, air mails, the Post Office Savings Bank—all these were brought to the screen against a background of the communities they serve. One of the most recent of the Unit's films touches a still wider interpretation of the theme. *We Live in Two Worlds* shows the ultimate significance of communications in the political world. While the armies of Europe stare at each other over heavily guarded frontiers, the civil populations speak peacefully over the frontierless network of telephones and telegraphs.

EXPERIMENTS WITH A PURPOSE

From the first, a wide interpretation of the Communications theme has met with the approval of those in charge of the Public Relations Department of the Post Office.

Moreover, they have encouraged technical experiment, realising that this is necessary to enable the cinema to serve new ends. The members of the G.P.O. Film Unit have been unique among professional workers in their enjoyment of this freedom, and they have made good use of it. *Coal Face*, for instance, was an experiment in the use of instrumental music, choruses and natural sound, cut rhythmically in counterpoint with the picture; *Fishing Banks of Skye* was an experiment in free commentary; *Cable Ship* used the voices of the workers themselves to describe their jobs. Some of the experiments were less successful than others; but without them such a film as *Night Mail* could not have been made.

The freedom for technical experiment is illustrated most strikingly in the work of Len Lye. In *Rainbow Dance* and *Trade Tattoo*, especially, he has experimented not only with abstract patterns but also with the application of artificial colour to subjects originally photographed in black and white, and he has worked out a system of exact colour control which is in advance of anything which has yet been attempted.

REACHING THE AUDIENCES

The Unit has also created its own methods of distribution. The more outstanding productions of the G.P.O. Film Unit are commercially released and are seen in cinemas throughout the country. The non-theatrical distribution of G.P.O. films is effected by means of a special organisation.

At big trade exhibitions (Olympia; Belle Vue, Manchester; Kelvin Hall, Glasgow, etc.) G.P.O. cinemas are installed and continuous displays are given. Special Post Office exhibitions are organised in various cities throughout the country each winter. In conjunction with these there is usually a Post Office cinema.

In addition to central displays of this kind, travelling projection units are used. With machines, operators, screens and films, they are capable of showing in almost any sort of premises. The use of such travelling units continues the policy of bringing the Post Office before the public by going out to the audiences as well as bringing the audiences to the cinema. By this means G.P.O. films are shown in all kinds of places and to all kinds of people. A special service provides film displays in schools, in collaboration with Directors of Education. For this work six travelling projection units have been allocated this year. They will visit the schools controlled by seventy-two local education authorities. Finally, the Library service distributes copies of G.P.O. films, sound and silent and in all sizes, to borrowers who have their own projection apparatus.

It is difficult to estimate the total annual audiences reached by all these means but it must be of the order of millions.

CONTINUITY OF PRODUCTION

John Grierson, who was associated with the G.P.O. Film Unit from its inception, resigned in June, 1937. Perhaps the tribute he would value most from me is the recognition that the work he did for the Unit is an inspiration to further experiment and to the exploration of new fields, and a basis for the more mundane job of consolidating the ground already explored. He bequeaths his experience and his inspirational qualities. His co-producer, Alberto Cavalcanti, and his chief director, Harry Watt, who have done so much to assist him, remain to continue the work. Finally, the Public Relations Department continues its wise and fair policy of allowing the Unit to serve the Post Office in its own way.

All this means continuity. Continuity of policy and of performance. A dozen new films are almost ready for this winter's programmes. Their range is wide, covering such subjects as road transport, Post Office finance, the training of Post Office messenger boys, a study of the countrywide network of overhead wires and underground cables, the

daily round of a country postman, and the printing and binding of the telephone directory. There is also a new Len Lye film—his first attempt at a studio picture—in black and white this time.

PROJECTED NEW FILMS

Though Grierson's time as Film Officer was short in relation to the scale of the work he inaugurated, he managed to make films of most of the main aspects of the Communications theme. But such is the scope of the undertaking that the work of the Unit till now can be regarded as no more than a beginning. For example, the recent film *Calendar of the Year* glances at the following subjects—ship-shore radio, emergency calls, regional activity, seasonal rushes in town and country, stores and materials, television technique, social events, theatre bookings, sport, news service, holidays, shipping service, trade, finance, the Christmas rush. Of each of these the film gives a fleeting glimpse, and yet each could be the subject of extended treatment, dramatic, amusing or informative.

And there are many aspects of Communications which have scarcely been touched at all. The relations between the Post Office and regional communities is one. The industrial regions and the country districts of England, Scotland and Ireland have each their own individuality, their own economic and natural life, which wait to be described in relation to the Communications Service. The Unit has made some excellent films of the Post Office seen from within, and has done much to describe the service in relation to the people. Now it may proceed to describe the people in relation to the service, the life that goes on at the other end of the trunk lines and the more distant parts of the railway system, and beyond. Here lies a rich and varied range of subjects. A film is proposed, and partly shot, on the subject of the Scottish region. This is a beginning; films of other regions will follow.

The Post Office service to shipping is another promising subject. Most obviously dramatic is the service to ships in distress. On this a script has been prepared and production will begin this winter. The dramatic possibilities of submarine cable maintenance have not been touched, for *Cable Ship* was primarily a technical film.

It is too soon yet to speak about plans for the more distant future, but one thing is certain: there is enough work to keep the Unit busy for years to come.

THE LONDON AND MANCHESTER REPORTS

Reviewed by F. WILKINSON, Headmaster, Latymer Upper School, London

LONDON AND MANCHESTER have now added reports to the already large number of reports on the use of films in school. In June the Manchester Education Committee followed up its report of October, 1935, with a further survey, and in July the London County Council issued its first report in a printed pamphlet of sixty-three pages.

The London Report contains two sections—"Sound Films in the Classroom" and "Mass Demonstration in Local Cinemas," whilst the Manchester Report is devoted to silent films used in classroom teaching and to mass demonstration of background films in sound by the G.P.O. Film Unit. This latter report, amounting only to thirteen typewritten foolscap pages, does not pretend to be more

than a brief summing-up of new experience gained from two years' extended experiment, concluding with a list of problems on which "extensive and careful research is needed."

It is therefore to be assumed that Manchester schools will be actively engaged for some time to come in working out a scheme of education by film, and although this is somewhat belated progress, it is at any rate welcome news to find that attention is to be given to such "immediate needs" as "purchase of films to form a *large* film library," "provision of more projectors so that films can be used more easily *in normal school work*" and "the equipping of more rooms for visual instruction purposes." The italics

are mine, and it is to be hoped that the expressions thus indicated have all the significance they can be made to imply.

In sum this is a commendable programme, but one cannot avoid the criticism that since Manchester's problems have been effectively settled many times over elsewhere, it would be wiser policy to omit the research and concentrate on the provision of apparatus and the formation of a film library. The choice of suitable films for such a library will not prove so difficult a task as the committee supposes. There are now plenty of educational films which every English child will profit by seeing during its school career.

In the case of the London report the committee began by making themselves aware of all previous investigations, and before the actual lessons were given, laborious preparations were made to ensure that the conclusions arrived at should be pedagogically sound. The film was tested against all other mechanical aids and representative types of film were chosen and tried out on as many types of children as English schools contain.

The result is an intentionally conclusive and authoritative document, and there is every reason to believe that it will carry conviction where conviction is needed. Its main fault is that it is somewhat ponderous in its method of treatment and, in company with the Manchester report, it too deals with matters which have been widely ventilated and which one had come to suppose were already accepted fact. Even in its decision to investigate the sound film it cannot claim originality. Its chief virtue, therefore, lies not so much in its discovery of new facts, but in its re-statement of old facts with the substantial support of London behind them.

Taken together the two reports cover much the same ground, but in value they cannot be compared. In fact it would be a kind act on London's part if a copy of its report were sent to Manchester which would find many of the matters it treats as problems convincingly solved. For instance, Manchester believes that "the best way of adapting a room for cinema purposes has still to be found." Here London is wisely content to borrow from the experience of Glasgow and surely Manchester can do the same. There is no problem to be met in this respect except that of expense, which simply cannot be avoided. To provide a projector is only one item. Adequate ventilation and the protection of the eyesight of the children from strain are essential concomitants, but these are no longer problems. Manchester acknowledges the necessity of these things, but persists in preferring to keep them as problems.

Another opportunity for London to help Manchester occurs when the latter avers that "the relative efficiency of the sound film does not seem to have been established." If this were true in June, it ceased to be so in July, for the London report settled the question of sound versus silent film in schools so finally that the committee "are agreed that to-day the balance of advantage in school lies with the sound projector, and hence we consider that schools should be equipped with projectors capable of showing both sound and silent films."

There are only two objections really to the sound film and neither of them concerns its intrinsic properties. Local Education Authorities dislike it because of its expense, and teachers suspect it because it introduces a rival to themselves in the classroom. When these objections have been removed all the others which are mere rationalisations will disappear also. The right attitude is that of the London Committee which makes provision for both kinds of film.

Where the reports deal with classroom technique there is still greater divergence. Manchester is in "general agreement that it is essential that teachers should have a preview before using the film" (a requirement which should surely have been taken for granted) and then follow these words—"This should determine the method of using the film—*where to show stills—where to slow down. . . . Repetition of important scenes* and a second showing of the film *may facilitate learning.*" The italics again are mine.

The best expert opinion is averse to all stopping of a film and to altering its rhythm. The supreme quality of the film over all other mechanical aids is its animation. If it is robbed of this quality it loses its claim for employment. Also an educational film, even of the classroom teaching type, must be, in its own sphere, a work of art, so that as it teaches it also gives the child an experience in æsthetics. In other words an educational film must have shape and unity, and both these properties find their creation in movement. To alter the movement of a film in any way, therefore, is to destroy it. It must give its message in its own way and that message is derived from the cumulative experience of the whole showing. If stills are needed they should take the form either of lantern slides or, better still, of enlargements of significant shots displayed on the walls of the classroom. There they should remain for several days to keep the memory of the class fresh. They can also be used for revision in place of the actual film.

The London committee came to much the same conclusions, as the following quotations will show: "In the replies from some schools, importance has been attached to 'still' pictures and the need for mechanical devices for stopping the film and for reversing it in order to repeat a section. There are silent film projectors which can do both these operations, and there are no apparent mechanical reasons why the same devices should not be fitted on a sound film projector; but one of the valuable assets of a film is a certain RHYTHM, which would be lost entirely by frequent stoppages. Frequent stoppages would reduce the film to the level of the epidiascope or lantern. In depicting action, movement and rhythm, the film has no rival, and in its presentation of slow motion and time lapse photography it is unique. Of course, all schools recognise this. What is not sufficiently recognised is that to be continually stopping the film is to destroy its essential qualities and value." If the word "frequent" were omitted London would be abreast of the best practice.

Sufficient has been said about both of these reports for it to be realised that they both contain much material for thought, but the most useful feature about them both is that they are the outcome of a great volume of actual teaching by film.

In conclusion a tribute should be paid to the London committee for two invaluable assertions. Taken together they should cause talk to be replaced by action. "We consider that, if films are to take their proper place in the classroom, the initiative as regards the provision of projectors and films must be transferred from the schools to the local education authority." And, "We consider that no further investigation as to whether films are useful in the teaching in the classrooms of elementary, central or secondary schools is called for." If this advice is followed a great deal of energy and money will be saved, and the next stage in the development of the film in education can begin, a stage which should concern itself with securing for the teachers the films they want.

SUB-STANDARD SOUND PROJECTORS

Notes for teachers, on points to be considered in selecting sound projectors for schools and on how to obtain the best results from them; by H. D. WALEY, Technical Officer of the British Film Institute

SELECTION OF THE PROJECTOR

Volume of Sound.—Naturally the first point regarding which the purchaser of a 16mm. sound projector will require to be satisfied is that it produces a sufficient volume of sound, and that this sound is a reasonable reproduction of the sounds originally recorded.

The demonstration theatres attached to salerooms are necessarily on a small scale, and consequently afford no sufficient opportunity for judging a projector's maximum output. Where there is room for any doubt in this matter, a demonstration should be given in the actual room where the projector is to be used.

Quality of Sound.—With regard to the quality of reproduction, the commonest fault is a tendency to lose the higher frequencies. This tendency does not always manifest itself in an audible excess of bass, because the designer guards against this by filtering out an appropriate amount of the amplifier's low frequency output. In speech reproduction the sounds which suffer most are the sibilants, and this is a point to be watched in appraising sound. In addition to this the voice will lack individuality, and musical instruments will lose their characteristic tone, because these qualities are conferred by harmonic overtones of high frequency.

Quietness of Mechanism.—It is perhaps needless to add that the projection mechanism of a sound machine which is intended for classroom use should be quiet-running so that the sound from the moving parts does not interfere with the sound from the speaker.

Mains Current.—Where it may be desired to run a projector on Direct Current, it should be ascertained whether this is possible without the use of a rotary converter, which converts Direct Current to Alternating Current. Some sound projectors will run silent films on Direct Current of any voltage, others will also run sound on 100 to 110 volts Direct Current (but not always on higher voltages) while others will not run at all without Alternating Current.

Shutter Changing.—For the correct speed of twenty-four pictures a second, a two-bladed shutter gives sufficient protection against flicker, but for the silent speed of sixteen pictures a second three blades are generally necessary. Some projectors meet this difficulty by using a three-bladed shutter permanently, and others by offering some method of changing the type of shutter carried as occasion demands. In this latter case the change over should be tried out in order to ensure that it is not a too difficult bit of manipulation.

Is the Amplifier Detachable?—In some designs the projection-head can be easily detached from the amplifier and treated as an independent unit. This is a great advantage where the projector is to be used with sound, principally in one place, but may be also required to show silent films in other rooms, as the portability of the silent head is then

a very necessary feature. Moreover, should the amplifier require to be repaired it is an advantage if it can be detached for this purpose rather than that the whole machine should have to be sent away.

S.M.P.E. Standard.—The fact that 16mm. sound film is unsymmetrical, having perforations on one side and sound track on the other, leaves room for two possibilities in design—according to which way round the film is to be threaded in the projector.

Owing to a misunderstanding, opposite standards were promulgated almost simultaneously in America and Germany and this country found itself faced with the problem of deciding which standard to follow. The matter was submitted to arbitration, and in March, 1936, the American (or S.M.P.E.) standard was officially adopted. In this standard the perforations of the film—and consequently the teeth of the sprocket-wheels—are towards the operator. It is important to note, in purchasing a machine, that it conforms to the S.M.P.E. standard.

As there are still a certain number of German standard (D.I.N.) films in circulation, it is also important to specify S.M.P.E. standard in ordering prints.

It is possible to run prints of one standard on projectors of the other by the use of a reversing prism. A prism, however, is an unwelcome addition to the parts of the projector which need to be kept scrupulously clean. An alternative scheme, involving the use of a pivoting double-pointed claw has been evolved by one designer.

HANDLING THE PROJECTOR

The handling of a sound projector is not much more complicated than the handling of a silent one. The following are among the points to be noted. In most makes there are certain switches which require to be turned on a short time before sound is needed in order to warm the valves.

Care must be taken not to stop the projector in the middle of a picture without fading out the sound, as the speaker will emit a howl while the film is slowing down.

While it is possible, with some makes of projectors, to switch into reverse when the sound-head is threaded, this should not be done, because the intermittent claw will be strained in dragging the film through the sound-head. In this case the film must be released from the sound-head if it is desired to run in reverse. In other cases, where machines have two driven bottom sprockets, the film can be run backwards through the sound-head safely.

THE POSITION OF THE SPEAKER

By far the most vexatious problems in handling a sound projector in a classroom are liable to arise with regard to avoiding unwanted echoes. The average classroom presents a considerable area of hard bare wall, and sound from a loud-speaker tends to rebound off these surfaces and

multiply echoes which drown the original sound-waves. Acoustic conditions quite favourable to the human voice are unfavourable to the mechanical voice, because the latter necessarily excels in quantity rather than quality of sound, and this peculiarity renders it especially subject to echo effects. Moreover, the design of the speaker supplied with a portable set aims at compactness above everything, and misses certain refinements which could be introduced if permanent installation were in view. In fact there is no doubt that ideal conditions can only be obtained by confining the use of mechanical sound, whether from radio

or projector, to a permanent, properly-prepared room.

There are, however, certain steps which can be taken to get the best results in an ordinary classroom. The speaker should be placed high up and tilted down a little so that the audience themselves act as a sound-damping surface. The speaker should be stood on a mat of felt or some similar substance, with a certain amount of mat projecting in front of it, so that echoes may not rise off the shelf or table on which it stands. If necessary, further damping may be obtained by hanging a few square yards of felt in a frame on the back wall opposite the speaker.

WHY SUB-STANDARD PROJECTORS ARE EXPENSIVE

THE DESIGN OF sub-standard projectors, both sound and silent, appears to have reached a more or less stable condition so that no fundamental changes appear likely in the near future. Nevertheless a tendency may be observed among potential buyers to hang back in the hope of seeing current price-levels considerably lowered. Such an attitude indicates failure to take account of a variety of factors which combine, and are likely to continue to combine, to keep projector prices round about their present level, even if they do not rise.

COMPLEXITY OF THE APPARATUS

In the first place, a projector is a more complicated piece of apparatus than at first glance might lead the casual observer to suppose. Its deceptive air of simplicity is often simply a tribute to the artistic eye of its designer. Actually it displays unusual complexity in that it combines three different sorts of science, mechanical, electrical, and optical. A silent projector is built up out of about 400 bits and pieces, while a sound one frequently contains over 750. The shaping of each of these pieces requires several processes many of which need to be carried out with a high degree of precision. For example, the cross movement of a 16mm. sound projector has a tolerance of $2/10,000$ ths of an inch only.

DISTRIBUTION AND SERVICING

To the cost of manufacture must be added the cost of distribution (including advertising) and last, but by no means least, the cost of servicing. When a motor car refuses to go because its tank no longer contains any petrol, or for some equally simple reason, there is always a local garage to which the owner-driver may look for help. But when some slight trouble, often equally simple in its cause, upsets the working of the projector, there is likely to be no expert aid available nearer than the London agent, or at best the agent in the nearest large town. Looked at from the point of view of the London agent, this means that he must be prepared to service machines all over the country, or travel round training local agents in the larger provincial towns. In either case this is an expense which must be covered by the price fixed for the projector.

COST TO MANUFACTURER OF LAMPS, VALVES, ETC.

Another factor which prevents prices falling below a certain level is the necessity for the manufacturer of the projector to buy certain components ready-made from other sources. For example, projector lamps, valves, and photo-cells are components which lie outside the manufacturing scope of even the largest projector factory. A few projector

manufacturers make their own lenses and a few lens manufacturers make their own projectors, but in most cases the lens also is bought from outside. In any event, the production of a good lens cannot be a cheap process. The designing of a lens requires something approaching mathematical genius. Extreme care is required in preparing the raw material, optical glass, and the mechanics employed in shaping the lens often work to tolerances of less than a millionth of an inch.

WHY NOT LESS COMPLEX APPARATUS?

A slightly different line of argument which is sometimes brought forward concentrates on the suggestion that at any rate classroom projectors ought to be cheaper and suggests that a return to the hand-turned machine would be a step in the right direction. This suggestion overlooks the fact that hand-turning implies the use of a low-wattage lamp, since high wattage lamps require cooling by means of a constantly-run fan, and that to drop the standard of screen brilliancy back to where it stood twelve years ago would rule out the possibility of projecting in semi-daylight, a practice which is becoming increasingly recognised as valuable in the classroom.

A classroom projector requires to have a high light output and to be very noiseless in running. This latter quality results largely from intelligent design, robust construction, and precise manufacture. All these things cost money.

WHY PRICES MIGHT EVEN GO UP

There is, therefore, little chance of "cheap classroom models" making their appearance. Neither is there any probability in the near future of a fall in the prices of projectors. All manufacturers of light machinery, including projectors, are being affected by the new rearmament programme either through rises in the price of raw materials or through pressure of work on component parts of aeroplanes and similar equipment.

With these facts in view the policy of waiting for prices to change seems a short-sighted one. They may easily change in a direction unfavourable to the buyer.

H. D. W.

Film-Slide Projectors

The findings of the British Standards Institution Committee on Film-Slides have not yet been promulgated and for this reason many of the designs pending are still awaiting further developments before appearing on the market. The list of apparatus, which was to have been published in this number, is therefore being held over.

RATE OF CHANGE

In our series of articles on film production for teachers A. D. SEGALLER, B.Sc., describes how he made a diagrammatic film to explain the first principles of the Differential Calculus

RATE OF CHANGE is a 9-minute 16mm. silent film for schools. It attempts to explain in a more vivid way than is possible in a textbook the first principles of the Differential Calculus, which so many pupils find hard to grasp at the start. The Calculus deals essentially with movement, more so than any other branch of Pure Mathematics, and is therefore ideal for film treatment. The film is intended for use in classes which have matriculated and are proceeding with Science, Engineering, or Higher Mathematics. It is distributed by Visual Education.

Except for four very short shots, the film consists entirely of moving diagrams. In making it I met several problems which may be of interest to teachers or others who want to make diagram films.

Adopting Mr. H. D. Waley's suggestion (SIGHT AND SOUND, No. 16, p. 182), I used a diagram-table with the camera screwed in a fixed position pointing vertically down at the horizontal plywood table 3ft. below it. The camera was a 16mm. Paillard-Bolex and it gave completely satisfactory results with Stop-Motion, with absolute constancy of exposure from one frame to the next.

A SIMPLE METHOD OF ANIMATION

In the film white lines and letters move on a black background and, following another of Mr. Waley's suggestions, the animation was entirely done by moving "masks" and not by the much more laborious method of "separate drawings" of professional cartoon-makers. That is to say, the various moving lines and letters of white were drawn on separate pieces of black paper which were placed on top of the black background and were moved across it in minute stages from one frame to the next.

This led to the first problem: how to prevent the edges of the black "masks" from showing up against the black background. Such an effect would be mainly caused by the shadow of the edge, and this meant using a fairly stiff paper which would not buckle up too much under the heat of the four 100-watt lamps less than three feet away. But the "edge" effect also depends partly on the type of surface of the paper. Here I was very lucky in finding a black paper of just the right quality, neither too matt nor too shiny. I used the black "Pastel Paper" made by Canson et Montgolfier, which can be bought cheaply at any Artists' Materials shop. Through using this paper, and also under-exposing by about $1\frac{1}{2}$ stops to obtain a "contrasty" effect, the edges of the masks were never visible at all in the finished film on the screen.

The special surface of this paper was useful in other ways: for instance, I often had to gum on to it letters cut out of white paper, which later had to "jump out of" the picture. This meant unsticking them, and the gum used to leave behind a shiny stain on the black paper; but on slightly wetting the surface and rubbing it, all traces of the stain disappeared, and the surface always dried quite uniformly black.

To give an idea of the method, here is a description of how one shot was carried out. The "still" (Fig. 1) shows a symbolic motor-car tracing out its own distance-time graph. In the film the car starts at the bottom, and the curve is not there at first. As the car moves away upwards, gathering speed, the dotted lines move outwards with it and their point of intersection traces out the curve, which continues to grow till car and curve pass off the screen at the top. The way this was carried out is shown in Fig. 2.

ANALYSIS OF ONE SHOT

There were three main sheets or "masks" of black paper (in the diagram of Fig. 2 they are all shaded differently, but this is only to make them more easily distinguishable; actually all three sheets were of the same black Canson paper). The background sheet A was pinned very firmly down to the table, with the complete curve already drawn on it in white ink. Sheet B was an L-shaped piece edged on the inside with the two white lines, one horizontal and one vertical, which formed the "axes" of the curve. This sheet was stuck down firmly to A at the three places marked "x," but was loose everywhere else. Sheet C was the moving "mask": the two arms, edged on the inside with the two white dotted lines and bearing the round dot P, passed underneath B and out of the picture. Besides these three large pieces, the car itself was on a separate piece of black paper, as were also the "x" and "y" and the other two dots. These all had to be moved separately during the animation. To give an idea of the actual sizes of the sheets, the "screen" on the table measured 11 inches by 9 inches.

The shot lasts 12 seconds on the screen; at 16 pictures per second, this meant about 190 pictures. The actual amount the mask had to be moved from one picture to the next worked out at $1/32$ of an inch.

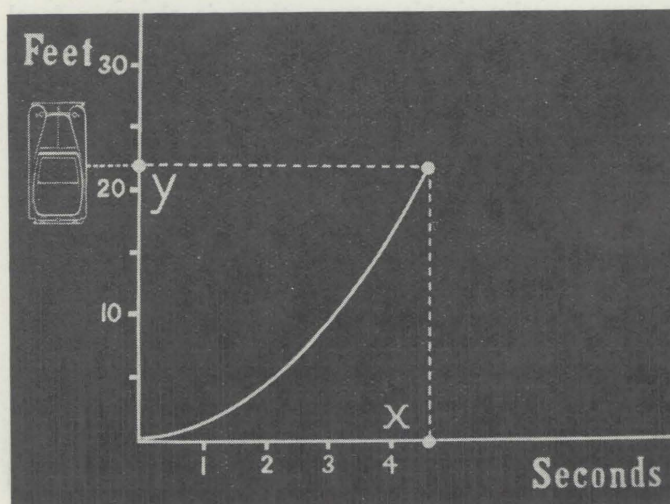


Figure 1

So in order to animate, I started with the mask C right down in the corner, hiding all of the curve on A. After exposing each picture I moved C $1/32$ of an inch to the right, and up a bit, so as to keep the dot P always on the curve as I gradually uncovered it; the car also had to be moved up. A celluloid ruler marked in thirty-seconds of an inch was used to measure the distance l for each setting, and before taking each picture the right-angle shown in the diagram was checked with a protractor. Without this the movement on the screen could not have been smooth.

Thus in steps of $1/32$ of an inch the curve was gradually uncovered and the shot completed. With such a large number of settings to make I found it absolutely necessary to have beside me the numbers of the pictures written on a piece of paper, and cross out each one immediately I had taken it, as a check against accidentally taking the same setting twice.

LONG SHOTS AND CLOSE-UPS

In another sequence I wanted to cut several times from a long-shot to a close-up and back during movement, to make the explanation clearer. Unfortunately I had no means of moving the camera nearer the table to get a close-up, so I had to make an exact replica to scale of part of the diagram and all its masks, to three times the size (Fig. 3). As I was not then sure how I wanted to cut the sequence, I shot the whole of the animation twice, once in long-shot and once in close-up; so that about half of this animation was wasted.

The most interesting problem was that of the dissolves or mixes. Like everything else, these were done in Stop-Motion. The first shot of the mix was faded-out by using successively smaller lens stops from one picture to the next, down to zero; the film was then wound back in the camera to the beginning of the fade-out (this is possible with the Bolex as each frame wound back makes a click); the new diagram was then substituted and faded-in by the reverse process to the fade-out.

DISSOLVES AND MIXES

For such a mix to look smooth on the screen in diagram work, the brightness on the screen must not alter during the mix, and must be the same as that of the actual diagram shots which are mixing. A special example of how such a

mix can be used is when part of a diagram fades-out (or in), the rest not altering meanwhile. Suppose a certain word has to fade-out from a diagram while the rest of the diagram "stays put." Treated as a mix, the entire diagram is first faded-out; the camera is then wound back exactly the right number of frames, and the word removed from the diagram. The diagram minus the word is then faded-in again. Provided the mix is perfectly smooth and of constant brightness, the effect on the screen is very satisfactory, and this method gave good results in *Rate of Change*.

To ensure a constant brightness or intensity during the mixes, it was necessary to find the right series of stops or f-numbers for the fade-out and in. First the *length* of the mix was decided on (e.g., 16 frames). Then a series of f-numbers for the fade-out was calculated, such that the exposure for each frame was less than the one before it by the same constant amount, the last one being zero (darkness). After winding back 16 frames and changing the diagram, the new diagram was faded-in using exactly the same series of stops in the reverse order. In this way the sum of the two exposures, that is the total exposure, which each frame gets is the same for every frame in the mix, and is the same as that of the actual shots which are being mixed.

CALCULATION OF F-NUMBERS

This is how the series of f-numbers are calculated. The diameter of the lens-aperture is *inversely* proportional to the f-number; thus $f\ 2.8$ means the diameter of the aperture

is $\frac{1}{2.8} \times \text{focal length}$. The intensity, or exposure, will be proportional to the *area* of the aperture, i.e., to the $\frac{1}{(\text{square of f-number})}$.

So having decided on the number of frames for the mix and on the initial stop or f-number, the value of

$\frac{1}{(\text{square of initial f-number})}$ must next be found. Remembering that the last frame of the fade-out is to be given zero exposure, divide this value by one less than the number of frames in the mix, and then multiply the answer by 1, 2, 3, . . . etc. This gives a uniformly-increasing series of exposures as desired. To find the actual f-numbers, reverse the process—take the square roots and then the reciprocals. The answers will surprise you—but they work!

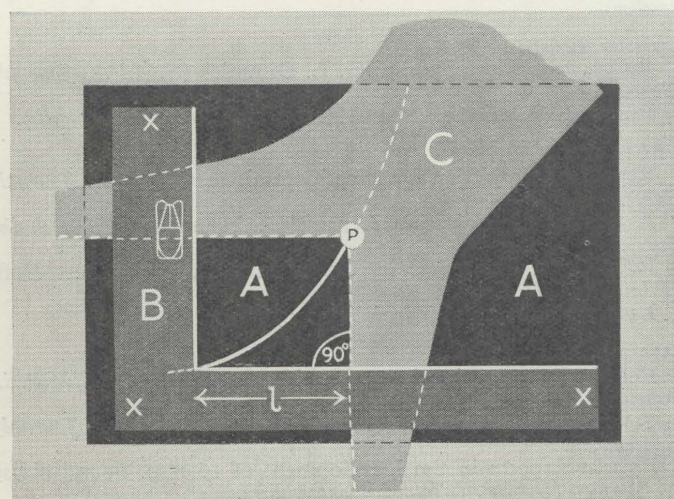


Figure 2

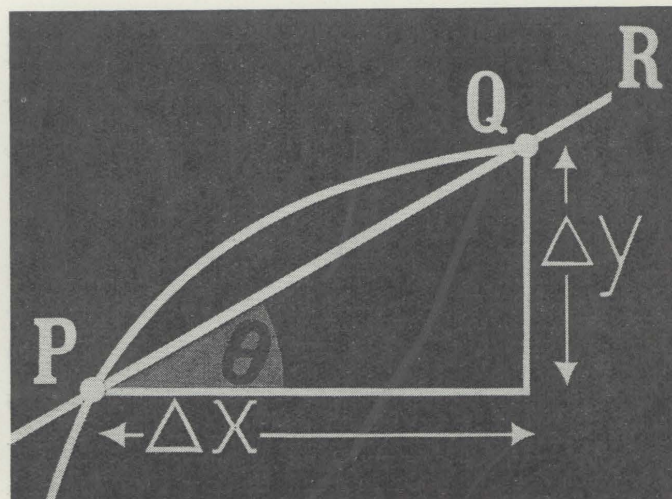


Figure 3

TECHNICAL NOTES

NEW BELL AND HOWELL MODELS

Messrs. Bell & Howell announce their intention of shortly introducing certain new features in their models 138 and 120. To both models a still picture device and a reverse action device are being added, while the 120 is to be further improved by the addition of an automatic rewind with a separate motor. These changes will not be accompanied by any change in price.

It is also proposed to introduce a new model 138 in two units, that is, the projector will be enclosed in a blimp to eliminate all mechanical noise, and the speaker will be a separate unit as in model 120 but with a 12-in. speaker instead of the present 6-in. This model will be sold at £146 retail, as compared to £138 for the present model which will still be available for those who require model 138 in one unit.

SCREENS

Messrs. R. F. Hunter have forwarded to us their current screen catalogue. Three varieties of screen surface are offered—crystal glass beaded, silver, and white—and these are made up into a variety of convenient portable forms. Alternatively, the screen material can be supplied unmounted. The catalogue can be obtained free on application to Messrs. R. F. Hunter, 51 Gray's Inn Road, London.

We have received from Messrs. Robert Gibson and Sons, of 45 Queen Street, Glasgow, a sample of paper silver-screen material which compares in efficiency very favour-

ably with the more expensive fabric silver-screen materials usually marketed. The width of the roll is 40 inches and the cost only 1s. per yard. Sufficient material for a very large classroom screen (say 4 feet 6 inches wide) could therefore be bought for a trifling sum. Probably it would be advisable to mount the material on plywood or builder's board with paste in order to overcome the natural tendency of paper to crease. The means of making a cheap silver-screen has been a long-felt want in the classroom, and this material is especially suitable as its brightness holds up well at an unusually wide angle for screen-surfaces of the reflective type.

AMATEUR SOUND RECORDING

We have received a booklet descriptive of the "Simplat" sound recording disc. These discs are of the coated glass type. A good flat velocity/frequency characteristic is claimed for these discs from frequencies between 300 and 10,000 cycles. Between 300 and 50 cycles there is a gradual falling off reaching an extreme point of 13 decibels. This, it is claimed, is a close approximation to the ideal curve. The records can be played back at once from five to ten times without any processing. After processing, the record should have a life of at least 200 playings. The records are suitable for use on any gramophone, mechanical or electrical. Full particulars may be obtained from the V.G. Manufacturing Co. Ltd., Gorst Road, Park Royal, London, N.W.10.

TECHNICAL ARTICLES OF THE QUARTER

The periodicals containing these articles are available for readers of SIGHT AND SOUND at the British Film Institute's Technical Offices at 5 Denmark Street, London, W.C.2

PHOTOGRAPHY

A Survey of German Sub-standard Cine Cameras; H. Plaumann (*Filmtechnik*, July).

Review of German Cine Lenses; H. I. Gramatzki (*Filmtechnik*, July).

Development in High Speed Cinematography; F. H. v. Eckard (*Filmtechnik*, July).

What Focal Length?; Edwind C. Buxbaum (*Movie Makers*, July).

Floral Close-ups; Edmund Zacher (*Movie Makers*, July).

Filming Shore Pools; Holger and Dorothy Van Aller (*Movie Makers*, August).

TELEVISION

R.C.A. Developments in Television; R. R. Beal (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, August).

Television from the Standpoint of the Motion Picture Producing Industry (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, August).

A Lens-ring Television Scanner; E. Schriewer (*Filmtechnik*, September).

FILM PRODUCTION

Denham Studios; L. C. Fermaud (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, July).

A New Viewpoint on the Lighting of Motion Pictures; G. Gaudio (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, August).

Recent Developments in Motion Pictures Set Lighting; E. C. Richardson (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, August).

Light-weight Stage Pick-up Equipment; L. D. Grignon (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, August).

Special Engineering Problems in a Motion Picture Studio; W. T. Strohman (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, August).

Evolution of Special-effects Cinematography from an Engineering Viewpoint; F. W. Jackman (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, September).

Apparatus for Film Cutting and Editing; Paul Hatschek (*Filmtechnik*, July).

Cine Deceits; Earl Theisen (*Movie Makers*, July).

Basic Cine Tricks; Louis Ell (*Movie Makers*, July).

COLOUR

The Advanced Technique of Technicolor Lighting; C. W. Handley (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, August).

New Agfacolor Process; J. L. Forrest and F. M. Wing (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, September).

Berthon-Siemens Lenticular Process, Taking, Copying and Projection Methods; E. Gretener (*Filmtechnik*, July).

Exposure Meters for Colour Photography; Curt Emmermann (*Filmtechnik*, July).

Finishing Dufaycolor on Location; T. A. Willard (*Movie Makers*, August).

Kodachrome To-day; Harris B. Tuttle (*Movie Makers*, September).

SOUND RECORDING

R.C.A. Recording System; G. L. Dimmick (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, September).

Eurocord (Klangfilm) Sound Recorder (*Filmtechnik*, August).

PROJECTION

Report of Projection Practice Committee (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, July).

A Survey of Projection Lenses; H. Naumann (*Filmtechnik*, July).

Educational Projection in Undarkened Rooms; Albert Hoft (*Film Und Bild*, July).

Eastman Has Sound (*Movie Makers*, July).

MISCELLANEOUS

Recent Progress in Acoustics; V. O. Knudsen (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, September).

Sound-track Editing Machine; G. M. Best (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, September).

Present Aspects in the Development of 16 mm. Sound-films; A. Shapiro (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, September).

Artificial Light-polarisers; E. Nahring (*Filmtechnik*, September).

Stereoscopic Projection with Light Polarisers; Oswald Bender (*Filmtechnik*, August).

THE NATIONAL FILM LIBRARY

IN THE EARLIEST days of the cinema, between 1896 and 1903, before 1,000 feet became the standard and popular length, many films no longer than 150 feet, and some as short as 50 or 75 feet, were made. To the Library's large and representative collection of these, thirty further examples have been added during the last few months. One of the most important early British films, marking the transition to the one-reel period, was *Rescued by Rover*, made by Cecil Hepworth in 1903. The Library has secured a copy of this notable production. Like its American counterpart *The Great Train Robbery*, which reached its climax in a chase, *Rescued by Rover* ends in a chase: the sheriff's posse is replaced by Rover the dog. Another important example of early British production now acquired is R. W. Paul's film *The Motorist*, which was made with the use of models. It has been described by F. A. Talbot in his book *Moving Pictures* as "an extraordinary example of Paul's fertility of thought and ingenious handiwork". Inspired itself by Méliès' work, it led to many imitations.

*Drame chez les Fantoche*s (1908), one of the earliest cartoons film made by Emil Kohl, the French film cartoonist, has also been acquired by the Library. Emil Kohl has been claimed as the originator of the cartoon film. Certainly he carried its development further than anyone else at the time.

During the one-reel period, between 1903 and 1911, film studios of all countries were prolific, and further examples of this period have recently been added to the considerable collection already in the Library's possession. So little is generally known about this most interesting period of history of the film that a mere list of titles is likely to be meaningless. The following are some examples: *The Stage Coach Driver and the Girl*, one of the earliest films to feature Tom Mix; *The Old Actor*, an early Mary Pickford film, made about 1910 when she was working at the Biograph studios under D. W. Griffith; *The Warning*, an early one-reel film featuring Lilian Gish; *Lieutenant Rose and His Patent Aeroplane*, an example of an interesting series of British films produced by the Clarendon Company, all featuring the popular film character Lieutenant Rose; *Edgar Allan Poe*, a Biograph film produced under the direction of D. W. Griffith with Herbert Yost and Linda Arvidson (Mrs. D. W. Griffith); *The Electrolysis of Metals*, an educational film produced by Charles Urban; *Jephtha's Daughter*, the first of a series of spectacular religious films which the Vitagraph Company began in 1909.

The occasional production during 1910 of films of 1,500 to 2,000 feet, heralded the advent of the present-day feature film. One of the most famous films of this period just purchased by the Library is *Lady of the Camelias* with Sarah Bernhardt in the title rôle. Terry Ramsaye in *A Million and One Nights*, has described this film as "a conspicuous effort at a realisation of star values". It foreshadowed the development which was to come two years later when the success of *Queen Elizabeth*, with the same actress, led to the establishment of Famous Players by Adolf Zukor.

Amongst more recent productions the Library is particularly glad to announce the acquisition of a copy of René Clair's comedy *The Italian Straw Hat*, presented through the courtesy of Miss Elsie Cohen of the Academy Cinema.

The Library continues to receive copies of modern productions. *Elephant Boy*, *Fire over England*, *Moonlight*

Sonata, *Dreaming Lips*, *Pagliacci*, *Three Smart Girls* and *For Valour* have all been given recently.

To the collection of films which are being permanently preserved as historical records have been added the official films of the Coronation of King George VI, photographed in Dufaycolor and Kodachrome. These films have been entrusted to the National Film Library by H.M. Office of Works. Other news-reels of historical importance recently acquired include films of the Funeral of King Edward VII, the Coronation of King George V and a number of news-reels showing suffragette activities before the War. The Library also receives week by week selected items from British Movietone news. Co-operation with this company ensures the regular filing for future reference of records of such of the world's events as are recorded in news-reels.

Twenty-four more films have been added to the Loan Section of the Library since the publication of the Library catalogue last season. One which will have an undoubted appeal to film societies and those schools which are equipped with 35 mm. sound projection apparatus is a Japanese film *Princess Kaguya*. This is a three-reel film, produced under the supervision of the International Cinema Association of Japan, based on a Japanese legend recorded in the eleventh century. Traditional Japanese dress and music are used.

Power Unit, a 16mm. sound film made by the Shell-Mex Oil Company, is another film which schools and film societies equally will find valuable. It shows, by a series of detailed cine-diagrams, how both the internal combustion engine and the Diesel engine work. The film contains no direct advertising of any kind. Teachers who have already used the film for senior science courses have testified to its utility; film societies will find in it a good example of modern cine-diagram technique applied to instructional purposes. *Lubrication by Shell*, another 16mm. sound film shows the production of oil and its transport to this country.

A Day in the Life of an African Native and *A Day in the Life of a Tanganyika Schoolboy*, two 16mm. silent films made by Mr. Ralph Cutler, of the Tanganyika Education Department, are also now available on loan.

Last year Mr. J. Fairgrieve gave £100 to the Film Library for the printing of copies of 16mm. educational films. Under the terms of this gift, two geographical films have been edited from material photographed by Lt.-Col. Lorimer, a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, *Hunza Round the Year* and *Crafts of Hunza*, and copies of these are now ready; the first film gives a calendar of economic activities the second is explained by its title. Four 16mm. travel films of modern Russia, made for Intourist, have also been added, *Leningrad*, *Moscow*, *The Crimea* and *Cruising the Volga*. Italy is represented by three 16mm. sound films; *Snow on the Dolomites*, a two-reel film of winter sports in the Dolomites; *Sicilian Spring* and *Pompeii*.

On Parade, an amusing coloured puppet film made by George Pal for Horlick's, is also available in 35mm. sound version. Another one-reel 16mm. silent film shows the various stages in the construction of the *Queen Mary*.

Lastly, a selection of early trick films has been made from films in the Preservation Section, and these are being edited into a 35mm. and 16mm one-reel film which will be added to the Loan Library.

Full information about the Library may be obtained from the Librarian at the British Film Institute. E. H. LINDGREN

WHY FILM SOCIETIES?

THE NEW SEASON for Film Societies has begun in London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Billingham, Belfast, Walthamstow, on Tyneside, in Exeter, Ipswich, Manchester, Ayrshire, Leicester and Oxford. Readers of SIGHT AND SOUND wishing to join a local Film Society are invited to write for particulars of Societies operating near them. Branches of the British Film Institute, known as Film Institute Societies, which will be presenting programmes of films, exist in London, Manchester, Merseyside, Cardiff, York, Bradford, and Leeds. All of these Societies also arrange lectures and discussions, publish local film guides, and, through the Information Service of the Institute, are able to obtain for their members comprehensive and reliable information on any aspect of the cinema.

Secretaries of Societies, showing 35 mm. or 16 mm. films, are invited to write for the Institute's Lists of 35 mm. and 16 mm. films—Continental, British and American, fictional and documentary—suitable for inclusion in Film Society programmes.

ORGANISING FILM SOCIETY PERFORMANCES

There are four possible ways of running a Film Society. The first is the way originally introduced by the Film Society, London. Programmes are presented on Sunday afternoons in a public cinema, or at some other time when the cinema is not normally open; admission is open only to paid-up members and, in most cases, to a limited number of members' guests. The advantages of this method are first-class projection and all the amenities of a modern cinema and access to a very wide selection of films. One or two Societies (e.g. Billingham and York) which wished to enjoy these advantages but could not, or did not wish to, obtain permission for Sunday shows arrange for a monthly "club night" at a local cinema on a week-day evening. The Society chooses the programme, guarantees a minimum box-office revenue, or pays the expenses of hiring films and "hiring" the cinema; but the cinema is open to the public as it is any other night. The additional advantage of this method is that it does not restrict membership to those who can afford to pay a lump sum down for six or eight performances, and that interest spreads far wider than the Society itself. The method does, however, present difficulties for the cinema manager, particularly if he books his ordinary films on a percentage basis; but they can be overcome. Other Societies that wish to have access to the widest selection but are unable to use public cinemas have installed, or have been able to obtain the use of, a 35 mm. apparatus in a properly licensed hall. The final way of running a Film Society is to operate on 16 mm., and there are a number of flourishing Societies doing this (e.g. Walthamstow, and the Society now formed in Colchester by the Ipswich Film Society, which itself operates on 35 mm. in a public cinema). There is a good and increasing supply of films on 16 mm., sound and silent: old silent classics such as *The Great Train Robbery*, *Potemkin*, *The Blue Light*, *The Covered Wagon*, Chaplin and Mack Sennett comedies; feature films such as *Man of Aran*, *The Road to Life*, *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, and *War is Hell*; documentary films including *Medieval Village*, *Night Mail*, *To-day and To-morrow*, *Nutrition* and *Children at School*; and some interesting amateur-produced films. The

advantages of this method are that expenses are less than 35 mm. and that performances can be held at any time that a suitable hall is available. In choosing a hall it is advisable, in the present state of 16 mm. film regulations, to consult the local police authorities.

REPERTORY PROGRAMMES

While all the Film Societies, during the coming season, will continue to enable their members to see new Continental films and experimental short films which ordinarily cannot be seen outside London, a number of them are planning also to revive outstanding films such as *Sequoia*, *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, *M*, *The Turn of the Tide* and *Sous Les Toits de Paris*. Arrangements have been made this season between the Film Society, London, and the London Film Institute Society whereby members of the former can attend the repertory programmes arranged by the latter. This development reflects the growing interest in the history of the cinema. A number of Societies also, are showing the old silent films now available from the National Film Library, including *The Great Train Robbery*, *Simple Charity* (with Mary Pickford) and *The Golf Game and the Bonnet* (with John Bunny and Flora Finch).

FILM SOCIETIES AND SHORTS

The provincial Film Societies are worth joining if only for the opportunity they provide of seeing good short films of every kind. Here is a selection from a few programmes at hand: *Joie De Vivre*, one of the few cartoons to get away from the Disney tradition, and an excellent film in itself; *The Private Life of the Gannets*, made by Dr. Julian Huxley; *To-day We Live*, Rotha's production for the National Council of Social Service; *Butterfly Queen*, a Starevitch puppet film; *Post Haste*, made by Len Lye; *Changes in the Franchise since 1832*, a G.B. Instructional diagrammatic film; *Puss in Boots*, a Lotte Reiniger silhouette and *Children at School*, the Gas Industry's social documentary.

LOCAL FILM GUIDES

The publication of local film guides which has always been an activity of the branches of the British Film Institute, is now being undertaken by a number of other Film Societies. The object of these guides is to enable film-goers to plan, at any rate, part of their film-going so that they do not miss important films and thereby to concentrate public support for them. In large population areas served by a large number of cinemas this is a particularly valuable service to film-goers and it helps to eradicate the erroneous idea that members of Film Societies are people who prefer a bad film, so long as it is Continental, to a good American or British film.

LECTURES, DEMONSTRATIONS, AND BOOKS

A final indication of the scope and value of the Film Societies is provided by the list of lectures, discussions, and now exhibitions, for example, of stills and original drawings which they are organising. The list of speakers includes leading film makers and film critics, members of Parliament, directors of education, psychologists and curators of art galleries and museums. A number of Societies have now also formed libraries of books on the cinema for the benefit of their members.

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By W. F. Elliott Foreword by Paul Rotha

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Additional kit of parts for 8 mm. available shortly

For long there has been a demand for a Super Projector at a reasonable price, and the "Special Peerless 9/16" is meeting with a great reception. The instrument is solidly constructed, with separate die-cast lamphouse, and is mounted on a heavy die-cast base giving great rigidity.

It is driven direct from the mains by a high efficiency, silent running, electric motor with built-in variable speed control. The quick-folding spool arms make the machine easily portable, and when packed in its specially designed fibre carrying case is very compact.

The movement is a new patented feature, having no film claws. Film wear and damage to perforations are thus reduced to a minimum. Even films with damaged perforations can be projected without difficulty, and give a perfectly steady picture. No technical experience is required to operate the "Special Peerless" Projector.

Threading the film is a matter of seconds. No centring of the picture is necessary, correct traction being entirely automatic.

The drive for the motor and rewind is external, with quickly detachable cover plate. The re-wind is high-speed automatic, and the spool capacity up to 400 ft.

The lamp and optical system have been scientifically planned to ensure super brilliancy, at the same time enabling "still" pictures to be shown for any length of time without damage to the film. Current consumption and lamp replacement are negligible.

Although supplied with 1½ in. focus lens as standard, a short focus lens (1 in.) is also available. Both give sharp brilliant pictures of maximum dimensions.

Electric motor drive
Speed control
Motor rewind
No claws
Reduced film wear
BRILLIANT STILL
without safety screen
Hinged lamphouse

Accessible gate
Slide framing and
focussing
Separate light and
motor switches
Extreme ease of
loading
Interchangeable lenses

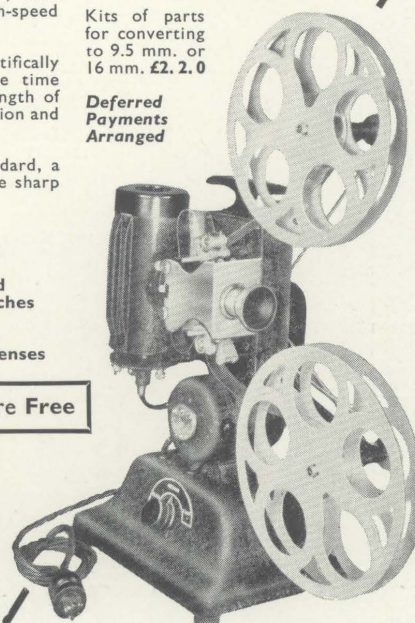
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with the same precision as the
famous S. P. "Wundatone"
sound-on-film Talking Picture
Apparatus.

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COMPLETE WITH
RESISTANCE

Kits of parts
for converting
to 9.5 mm. or
16 mm. £2. 2. 0

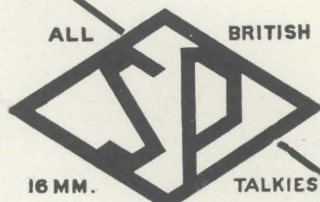
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